The Role Of Self-Efficacy And Emotional Exhaustion In Teacher Considerations Of Job-Related Stressors And Attrition: A Mixed-Methods Study

Raymond Nance

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THE ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY AND EMOTIONAL EXHAUSTION IN TEACHER CONSIDERATIONS OF JOB-RELATED STRESSORS AND ATTRITION: A MIXED-METHODS STUDY

by

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DISSERTATION

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my wonderful wife who was supporting, understanding, and kept the fire lit beneath me throughout this entire process. Her gentle, yet firm encouragement, informed by her experiences as she went through the same process, kept me moving forward for the past several years. Without her, it would not have been completed.

This work is also dedicated to my parents, Raymond and Linda, who have always encouraged me to pursue my dreams. Their encouragement and support throughout my life have led me to reaching this academic pinnacle. Love to both of you.
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ABSTRACT

Teacher attrition is a problem currently afflicting classrooms around the world. Emotional exhaustion and teacher self-efficacy have been demonstrated to be factors in attrition. This study assesses the efficacy of potential tools for use in evaluating emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy before problems arise and to guide professional development in efficacious directions.

This parallel-convergent mixed-methods study performed quantitative regression analyses on the joined effects of emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy to assess their potential mediating role between teachers’ job stressors and considerations of leaving the job. The existence of mediation was demonstrated. Qualitative thematic analysis of transcripts from six interviews with current teachers was conducted. Two themes, difficulties with administration and workload, emerged. Integration of the QUANT and QUAL data streams revealed that neither, by itself, generates a complete picture of the teacher experience. Researchers conducting similar studies should consider the use of a mixed-methods approach for a more comprehensive analysis.
Keywords: attrition, mixed-methods, emotional exhaustion, self-efficacy, administration, workload
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Teacher attrition in the United States has reached epidemic proportions with areas reporting record numbers of licensed, certified educators choosing to leave the profession (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Brown & Schainker, 2008; Espinoza et al., 2018; Spring, 2016). New Mexico is no exception, with the second highest teacher attrition rate in the U.S. (Carver-Thomas, & Darling-Hammond, 2017). In the Albuquerque area, the 2018-2019 school year started with over 300 educator vacancies (Perea, 2018). This resulted in Albuquerque Public Schools hiring 58 teachers from the Philippines (Perea, 2019). The increasing number of teachers choosing to leave education and pursue other careers has been blamed on a number of factors, including low salaries (Farber, 2010), job dissatisfaction (Ingersoll, 2001), lack of administrative support (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011), and student behavior problems (Aloe et al., 2014). Some studies have indicated that teachers with higher levels of training and skills, particularly in high-demand fields such as science and math, are more likely to leave teaching for jobs that offer greater opportunities and pay (Borman & Dowling, 2008).

Companies invest time and money to train new employees. As such, they are understandably concerned with employee commitment to the job and the corporation. Educational entities have these same concerns regarding employee retention. Up to 50% of teachers leave during their first five years on the job (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Maciejewski, 2007; National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future [NCTAF], 2003). This loss of human capital results in a financial loss
both to school districts and to those who leave (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). Experience is also lost in classrooms, negatively impacting students ((Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005; Brill & McCartney, 2008). Darling-Hammond (2010) argued that a lack of qualified, experienced, prepared teachers will significantly impact student learning. Consequently, understanding teacher commitment to the profession is a critical component in developing efficacious teacher training and evaluation programs.

Throughout history, education has been driven by paradigms defining who should be taught, what they should be taught, how they should be taught, and why they should be taught. The paradigms that define education and educator assessment in the United States began to shift again in the 1980’s with the release of *A Nation at Risk* (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983). One consequence was a move toward greater accountability in which teachers found themselves more and more under the magnifying glass of political and public scrutiny. During the 21st century, congressional acts and federally funded programs, such as the optimistically named *No Child Left Behind* [NCLB] (2002) and *Race To The Top* [RTTT] (Civic Impulse, 2018), pushed an agenda of greater scrutiny in education, particularly scrutiny of teachers. Teacher evaluation shifted from models that promoted growth and coaching to models in which students became commodities and teachers became workers on educational assembly lines. Teacher evaluation based on classroom practice decreased with the evolution of a new evaluation paradigm focused on student test performance (Ravitch, 2010).

In the new education paradigm, the value of a teacher was based on how much standards-based knowledge their teaching added to students who passed through their
classroom and on how well students retained that knowledge, as measured by standardized assessments, for a period of up to three years (Ravitch, 2010; Whiteman et al., 2011). A critical part of many assessment models was Value Added Modeling [VAM], a complex statistical procedure used to estimate the value of learning contributed by individual teachers (McCaffrey et al., 2003). Teacher evaluation models incorporating the results from high-stakes testing were used to determine reward or punishment based on student test scores (Minarechová, 2012; Tanner, 2013). With the use of testing to assess teacher quality, teaching for student growth diminished as teachers scrambled to modify curriculum and classroom practices in an effort to boost student test scores. Another consequence of this evaluation process was the de-professionalization of teaching, giving some in society the impression that teaching is an unskilled job, where teachers do little more than monitor students as they work through scripted learning programs (McDermott, 2013).

The Bush Administration’s No Child Left Behind, Obama’s Race To The Top and Every Student Succeeds Act [ESSA], and numerous other recent education reform efforts have left teachers reeling as they sought firm footing upon which to base their career (Darling-Hammond, 2004). Veteran and rookie teachers with whom I have worked have expressed feeling as if they were shooting at a moving target in planning for their annual professional growth and development plans. Frustration has led many of them to consider changing school districts or leaving teaching and moving to other professions, particularly professions in which they feel their job performance would be evaluated fairly (Billingsley, 1993; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Boyd et al., 2008; Macdonald, 1999).
Salary is frequently cited as a factor that influences the decision of teachers to change careers (Allegretto & Mishel, 2016; Joseph & Waymack, 2014; Murnane & Olsen, 1990). Teaching is among the lowest paid of professions requiring at least a bachelor’s degree. In 2017, the average salary for teachers in the U.S. was $59,660 (National Education Association, 2018). In New Mexico, that average was $47,122, a drop of 0.1% from the previous year (National Education Association, 2018). During that time, teachers in the Albuquerque Public Schools district earned an average of $49,102 (New Mexico Public Education Department, 2017). A 2014 study of teacher salaries showed Albuquerque to rank 116th among 125 U.S. school districts cited (Joseph & Waymack, 2014).

An administrator is the heart of their school, potentially pumping energy and enthusiasm into their teaching staff. However, a lack of administrative support has also been shown to influence teacher decisions to leave the profession (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011)). Administrator support can include supporting teachers in dealing with student behavior issues, in conflicts with parents, in assessments of student progress, and in the annual performance review process (Farber, 2010; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011). Administrators write budgets, impacting the ability of departments and programs in schools to survive and function. Teachers who have invested a great deal of personal time and energy into a successful program or educational initiative, only to see it cut by an administrator, report feeling disenfranchised in the school (Farber, 2010). Many teachers who do not feel that they are supported by their school administration have found it easier to leave their school or the profession.
One common reason cited by non-teachers for not going into the teaching profession is concern over dealing with student behavior issues. During this investigation, I have had non-teachers point out to me that they have enough problems with their own children, why would they want to also deal with the problems of other people’s children? Teachers cited the stress of not only dealing with behavior issues, but also the stress of feeling that they are not supported by parents or administrators in their efforts (Billingsley, 1993; Johnson et al., 2005; Kersaint et al., 2007; Sass et al., 2011). Students, upon seeing this lack of support, often increased their pattern of misbehavior (Johnson et al., 2005; Sass et al., 2011), resulting in a cycle of dysfunction.

In a mixed methods analysis of teacher attrition, Lindqvistet al. (2014) demonstrated that, during the first five years in the profession, teacher attrition is a complex, non-linear problem. By introducing qualitative data into a statistical study, they provided a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of early career teachers (Lindqvist et al., 2014). They pointed out that this understanding would not have been obtained using statistical analysis alone.

The current study used survey and interview data in a mixed-method analysis of the teacher attrition phenomena in New Mexico. The author explored the phenomena of teacher turnover in New Mexico through four research questions. The first research question was: what is the relationship between teacher turnover as a consequence of the imbalance between professional self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion (Aloe et al., 2014; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Khani & Mirzaee, 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010)? Emotional exhaustion was explored in this context as one of the three parameters of professional burnout, as described by Maslach and Leiter (1997).
The second research question was: what is the relationship between potential job-related stressors, professional self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion levels, and teacher attrition or ideations of leaving the profession? Multiple factors have been shown to contribute to teacher emotional exhaustion or burnout and self-efficacy (Aloe et al., 2014; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Fives et al., 2007; Friesen & Sarros, 1989; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Helms-Lorenz et al., 2012; Hong, 2010, 2012; Huberman, 1999; Hughes, 2012; Khani & Mirzaee, 2015; Santoro, 2013; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011; Zee & Koomen, 2016). While each of these could independently contribute to emotional exhaustion or reduce a teachers’ feelings of self-efficacy, the effect could also be cumulative (Khani & Mirzaee, 2014). However, a strong sense of self-efficacy could serve as a mediator variable between the negative impact of these contextual variables and the stressors leading to burnout (Khani & Mirzaee, 2014).

Professional self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion have been shown to share an inverse relationship (Aloe et al., 2014; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010) with strong self-efficacy being shown to help mitigate the negative effects of emotional exhaustion. This is an important balance, as emotional exhaustion may eventually lead to depersonalization in teacher relations to students and others and to a feeling of loss in professional accomplishments (Maslach & Leiter, 1999). Burnout potentially resulting from this imbalance has proven to be an important factor in teacher decisions to change schools or districts or to leave the profession entirely (Aloe et al., 2014; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Khani & Mirzaee, 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010).

Professional self-efficacy largely defines how well a teacher navigates these stressors encountered in their job (Hughes, 2012; Zee & Koomen, 2016). This study used
both quantitative and qualitative methods to explore the relationship between teachers’ ability to navigate several of the top potential stressors, their self-efficacy/emotional exhaustion balance, and how this impacted their dedication to their job or thoughts of leaving the profession.

As stated previously, this is a mixed-methods research (MMR) study. Johnson et al. (2005) asserted that the findings of quantitative studies are more meaningful when qualitative studies are used to inform those findings. Quantitative analysis would be used to explore potentially generalizable relationships between teachers' job-related stressors, the self-efficacy/emotional exhaustion balance. Statistical analysis was used in the study of the relationship between the self-efficacy/emotional exhaustion balance and attrition, whether leaving the career or changing schools or districts. Qualitative analysis, using data from interviews, was used to explore teacher perceptions of their own experiences with stressors and how this related to their own self-efficacy, emotional exhaustion, and potential for leaving teaching. The mixed-methods analysis culminated in exploring points of convergence as well as points of divergence between the quantitative and qualitative findings.

Before undertaking this research, the author needed to answer a question, why study both the relationship of the balance between self-efficacy/emotional exhaustion to job stressors as well as its relationship to teacher attrition? The problem of teacher attrition is not an easy one. It was theorized that much teacher attrition occurred due to reduced self-efficacy, resulting in emotional exhaustion leading to burnout. However, to truly understand the problem, the impact of the various stressors on teachers and on their balance between self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion was to be studied as well. Using
both quantitative and qualitative data to study this two-part problem provided a fuller, more comprehensive picture than that seen in existing studies.

This study presents previous research that includes studies of the principal stressors that teachers face in their jobs, the impact of those stressors on teacher self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion, as well as studies of teacher attrition. These were woven together to create a picture of the impact of stressors on teacher attrition as potentially mediated through a lens of self-efficacy/emotional exhaustion balance.

Teacher levels of burnout were measured in the three dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment, as described by Maslach et al. (2001).

**Significance and Purpose of the Current Study**

All teachers experience varying degrees of self-efficacy and burnout in their job. They experience all three dimensions of burnout described by Maslach (1993) at one time or another. Emotional exhaustion has been shown to closely interact with the self-efficacy a teacher feels in their ability to successfully do their job (Fives et al., 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010, 2017b; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Therefore, the levels of emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy are, together, hypothesized to have a strong mediating effect on teacher intentions to leave the profession as they encounter and deal with daily job-related stressors (Betoret, 2006). This study used mixed methods to answer the following four questions:

**Research Question 1: Quantitative:** Does emotional exhaustion for teachers in New Mexico vary with changes in the level of self-efficacy?
Research Question 2: Quantitative: Does the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion mediate the relationship between teachers’ job stressors and motivation to leave the teaching profession?

Research Question 3: Qualitative: How do teacher levels of self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion inform their experiences with job related stressors and potential intentions of leaving the teaching profession?

Research Question 4: Mixed: Can teachers’ perception of their experiences with job related stressors and knowledge of their levels of self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion be used as predictors of those who may leave the profession?

The first research question tested the inverse relationship between self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion that has been described in the literature to see if it existed in the current study population. It was hypothesized that a statistically significant, inverse relationship exists between teacher self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion.

The second research question quantitatively tested the hypothesis that self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion mediate teachers’ intentions of leaving the profession in response to the stressors encountered on the job. It was hypothesized that teachers with higher levels of self-efficacy and lower levels of emotional exhaustion would contemplate quitting at a lower rate than teachers with low self-efficacy and high emotional exhaustion, regardless of stressor levels. It was also hypothesized that the level of stress reported by teachers with lower levels of self-efficacy and higher emotional exhaustion levels would be higher and that these teachers would also show a greater tendency to consider quitting the teaching profession.
The third research question utilized semi-structured interviews to capture teachers’ voices regarding their perception of how they mediate the thoughts or intentions of quitting in response to the stressors they encounter on the job. It was hypothesized that teachers who identify as having greater self-efficacy would also indicate lower feelings of stress, job dissatisfaction, and intent to leave.

The fourth research question brought the entire study full circle by looking for a continuum of cause and effect in describing how teacher experiences with job stressors are filtered through a lens of self-efficacy balanced against emotional exhaustion and how that balance enables teachers to either address the difficulties of working under those stressors, or to leave and find other teaching positions or jobs.

**Theoretical Foundations and Philosophical Approaches**

The fact that Mixed-Methods Research uses both qualitative and quantitative data for analysis created a quandary in the selection of an appropriate paradigm (Creamer, 2018). By its very nature, MMR requires researchers to adopt a dialectic stance in which several types of data must be analyzed from multiple points of view or may require the use of more than one research paradigm (Creamer, 2018). For example, a paradigm frequently used in quantitative analysis, post positivism, encourages the researcher to be a distant observer, removing their own influence from the research and prioritizing the statistical analysis of variables (Plano-Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

Constructivism, a paradigm frequently applied to qualitative research, allows for individuals to construct their own realities, resulting in multiple realities that must be considered when analyzing data (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). Post positivists lean toward a single reality in which that reality is found through the application of a null
hypothesis in a quantitative study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Conversely, constructivists are closer to the subject of their study, even visiting the subjects at the study site while trying to filter through the multiple realities held by individuals (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). MMR requires a research paradigm that can accommodate the philosophical stances used in both qualitative and quantitative studies (Creamer, 2018; Creswell, 2015).

One such paradigm is pragmatism, a philosophical viewpoint often used in MMR and in which people have diverse viewpoints about reality (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). By drawing from many areas of philosophical thought, the pragmatist can apply whichever works to answer the research question (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010). In pragmatism, the research question, or questions, are the principal focus of the study (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2010).

A more recent paradigm used in MMR is that of critical realism. Critical realism is a philosophical stance, or meta-paradigm, in which reality exists, but that humans, as participants in that reality, can only understand, react to, and interpret that reality from the context of their own personal experience (Creamer, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). It is this contextual relationship with reality and knowledge that Creamer (2018, p. 48) addressed when she said, “Our perception of the real world is inevitably a construction of it that is influenced by our own viewpoints and experiences.” Her observation that it is entirely possible that many valid viewpoints could exist for a single phenomenon, due to varying observer context speaks to the substance of this study. Critical realism enables the researcher to better study problems requiring the
use of both quantitative and qualitative data. Critical realists bring empirical and sociological studies under a single umbrella, as knowledge about reality is not based solely on empirical data, but also on the perspectives the researcher brings to the study (Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

Phenomenology and critical realism posit the ontological perspective that multiple realities occur in multiple levels based on the life story and perspective of researchers and subjects (Johnson & Gray, 2010; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016). The experiences of one teacher in the classroom may vary from that of another teacher in the same subject with the same level of experience and the same type of students, based on the differences of context and how their life experience prepares them for that interaction. This study sought both to determine the strength of influences between multiple variables and to go beyond the empirical data to draw out the multiple perspectives experienced by both the subjects and the researcher. For this reason, the appropriate paradigmatic approach was determined to be critical realism.

This study draws on the Self-Efficacy Theory put forth by Bandura (1995, 1997) as a theoretical foundation for analysis of data. Bandura defined perceived self-efficacy as “…beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (1997, p. 3). In his self-efficacy theory, Bandura (1995, 1997) described four principal sources from which one receives information that guides their development of their own beliefs regarding their own self-efficacy (See Figure 1). These four areas are:

- Enactive Mastery Experience
- Vicarious Experiences
• Verbal Persuasion
• Physiological and Affective States

According to Bandura, any experiences one has that might influence their self-efficacy will be processed through one or more of these sources.

Bandura (1995, 1997) described enactive mastery experiences as those experiences in which one successfully enacts a particular task. He postulated that enactive mastery experiences are “…most influential source of efficacy information because they provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed” (Bandura, 1997, p. 80). According to Oettingen (1995, p. 149), “Successes build a sense of self-efficacy; failures weaken it.” These mastery experiences are the most effective way of developing a strong sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995). According to Bandura:

The extent to which people will alter their perceived efficacy through performance experiences depends upon, among other factors, their preconceptions of their capabilities, the perceived difficulty of the tasks, the amount of effort they expend, the amount of external aid they receive, the circumstances under which they perform, the temporal pattern of their successes and failures, and the way these enactive experiences are cognitively organized and reconstructed in memory. (Bandura, 1997, p. 81)

However, the levels of performance of a skill can raise, not affect, or can lower self-efficacy, depending on the individuals background and current situation. This aligns closely with the paradigmatic approach of critical realism described previously.
Oettingen (1995) also pointed out that the acquisition of a strong sense of self-efficacy in one area can carry over to other areas.

**Figure 1**

*Model of Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory*

*Note:* Model based on Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory as described in *Self-efficacy: The Exercise of Control.* by A. Bandura, (1997), W. H. Freeman and Company.

Bandura (1995, 1997) described vicarious learning as a social modeling process in which witnessing others successfully performing a task can result in elevated self-efficacy for the observer. According to Bandura (1995, 1997) and Oettingen (1995), when subjects observe a particular set of coping strategies being modeled, but they themselves do not perform any of the actions demonstrated, they can still experience elevated self-efficacy. This is what is seen when one thinks that if others can do a
particular thing, then so can they. However, watching others fail when they were thought to be equal to or greater than the observer in an employed strategy can also result in reduced self-efficacy. Equally important is the idea that “The greater the assumed similarity, the more persuasive are the models’ successes and failures” (Bandura, 1997, p. 87). People will generally feel more enabled when they see successful demonstrations of skill or strategies by someone of a similar ethnicity, gender, disability status, or other similar demographics (Bandura, 1995). Even though enactive mastery is the strongest of the four principal sources of self-mastery information, observing the successes and failures of others can sometimes override the effects of mastery experiences (Bandura, 1997). Those who see others failing at tasks similar to their own are likely to “…behave in ineffectual ways that generate confirmatory behavioral evidence of inability” (Bandura, 1997, p. 88).

Verbal persuasion, or encouragement, is a social phenomenon in which one is persuaded to believe that they have the skills and ability to succeed. Bandura (1997, p. 58) believed that “…people judge their capabilities partly through social comparison.” He pointed out that the words of others have been shown to have the ability to increase or decrease an individual's level of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1995). “People who are persuaded verbally that they possess the capabilities to master given tasks are likely to mobilize greater effort to sustain it than if they harbor self-doubts and dwell on personal deficiencies when difficulties arise” (Bandura, 1997, p. 101). Both Bandura (1997) and Oettingen (1995) pointed out the risk of falsely raising hopes and opinions in others regarding their ability. “To raise unrealistic beliefs of personal capabilities, however, only invites failures that will discredit the persuaders and further undermine the recipients’
beliefs in their capabilities” (Bandura, 1997, p. 101). The impact of persuasive feedback was shown to be most notable during the early stages of one’s skill development. Positive feedback will “…encourage individuals to measure their success in terms of self-improvement rather than by the triumphs of others” (Bandura, 1995, p. 4).

Psychological and emotional arousal or states and feedback are described as those moods, emotional state, stress level, and physical reactions that can be a factor in how a person feels about their abilities (Bandura, 1995, 1997). According to Bandura (1997, p. 106), “…the fourth major way of altering efficacy beliefs is to enhance physical status, reduce stress levels and negative emotional proclivities, and correct misinterpretations of bodily states.” Most people have experienced physical, or visceral, reactions to stressful situations where they might, or might not, experience success (Bandura, 1995). This visceral agitation can produce negative feedback to one’s consideration of their own efficacy and include “…hyperventilating; sweating; tensing; trembling; and experiencing a pounding heart, stomach upsets, and bouts of insomnia” (Bandura, 1997, p. 107).

However, Oettingen (1995, p. 150) pointed out that “…a low level of arousal while coping with a difficult or threatening course of action would indicate an assured sense of efficacy.” An individual’s mood has also been shown to exert a strong influence on their perceived level of efficacy. Bandura (1997, p. 111) pointed out that “Moods provide an additional source of affective information for judging personal efficacy because they often accompany changes in quality of functioning.” Moods that are more intense have also been shown to exert a stronger effect than weak moods. The exception, according to Bandura (1997, p. 111), is despondency which “…retards almost everything.” For the purposes of this study, despondency will be considered as aligning with emotional
exhaustion. Bandura also pointed out that “…a negative mood activates thoughts of past failings, whereas a positive mood activates thoughts of past accomplishments” (1997, p, 111).

Data analysis in the current study was undertaken using the theoretical foundation of Bandura’s self-efficacy theory. Teachers certainly experience influences on their teaching practice and life from all four areas Bandura described as influencing self-efficacy. As this study explored the relationship between self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion, the relevance of Bandura’s self-efficacy theory when considering emotional exhaustion was also considered.
Chapter 2

Review of the Relevant Literature

This review of the literature will focus on how the literature speaks to the research questions presented. One goal of the study is to examine papers describing teachers’ job-related stressors, self-efficacy, burnout and attrition, and synthesize from these studies a comprehensive model describing how teacher attrition can be driven by teacher interactions with job stressors through a lens of self-efficacy/emotional exhaustion balance. The broad areas to be addressed in this review of the literature are potential job-related stressors, the relationship of self-efficacy to emotional exhaustion, professional burnout, and teacher commitment and attrition.

Job-Related Stressors or Contextual Variables

In studies of teacher jobs and lives, no single cause or construct has emerged as the primary reason for teachers to leave the profession in which they have invested so much time and effort (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). However, studies have focused on a broad range of constructs that factor into teacher commitment to their profession (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Goldring et al., 2014; Guarino et al., 2006; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson et al., 2005; Kaiser, 2011; Kersaint et al., 2007; Khani & Mirzaee, 2015; Macdonald, 1999). Several authors have referred to daily job-related factors that potentially impact teacher feelings of self-efficacy and burnout as contextual variables or factors (Boyd et al., 2011; Khani & Mirzaee, 2015). In their studies of teachers’ burnout, self-efficacy, and job satisfaction, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009, 2010, 2011b, 2017a, 2017b) referred to these constructs as contextual variables, school context variables, and potential stressors.
The most frequently studied variables potentially impacting teacher job satisfaction and career choices are professional relations and support (Boyd et al., 2011; Chan et al., 2008; Fives et al., 2007; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011), salary and compensation (Allegretto & Mishel, 2016; Joseph & Waymack, 2014; Murnane & Olsen, 1990), classroom management and discipline (Aloe et al., 2014; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009, 2010, 2011b), school climate (Gritz & Theobald, 1996; Loeb et al., 2005; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016), time/workload demands (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Kersaint et al., 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009, 2010, 2011b), and high stakes teacher evaluations (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Farber, 2010; Ravitch, 2010). The model studied by Khani & Mirzaee (2015) provided crucial input in which job-related stressors, including those from their model, correlated to reduced self-efficacy, increased burnout, and higher teacher attrition. Most of the stressors they studied could be placed in the categories of excessive workloads and time demands, administrative support, bureaucratic or district constraints, as well as a lack of autonomy, resources, and educational values that match their own. Pines (1993) proposed that negative interaction with these broader categories will constitute barriers that keep teachers from feeling that their work is important or meaningful and can lead to burnout.

Teachers who feel that they can exercise adequate control over their stressors have been shown to have greater job satisfaction, not be ill as often, have less emotional exhaustion, and are less likely to quit the profession (Wang et al., 2015). It has also been shown that the number of years a teacher has been in the profession is a factor in their leaving. Teachers early in their career and teachers nearing retirement have the greatest
propensity for leaving teaching, creating a u-shaped curve when attrition is plotted against age (Boyd et al., 2011).

**Professional Relations**

The professional, day to day relationships and encounters with others in and out of the workplace can boost a teachers’ self-esteem and feelings of efficacy, or contribute to burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced professional accomplishment. Teachers often see the professional level relations they establish with others as a reflection of their own professional abilities. Negative relations with colleagues, parents, or administrators can contribute to burnout, while positive relationships can boost self-esteem.

**Colleagues.** Colleagues can provide support and guidance. Absence of these factors can result in feelings of not belonging (Clandinin et al., 2015; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011a, 2011b). Pressure to perform from colleagues can produce small amounts of burnout in the areas of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). The same study, after controlling for age and gender, found that pressure from colleagues to be perfect also resulted in feelings of reduced personal accomplishment. Buunk and Schaufeli (1993) proposed that nurses experiencing job related stress might withdraw from contact with colleagues as a way to avoid burnout and a negative impact on their self-esteem.

In their study of teaching stressors using support variables, Sass et al. (2011) demonstrated that stressors related to students, lack of support from superiors and from colleagues were related to job dissatisfaction and, consequently, intention to quit. However, they also found that potential stressors related to the support of superiors could
be mediated through the support of colleagues, indicating that strong collegial support can help to lessen the impact of poor administrative support. Unfortunately, as Buunk and Schaufeli (1993) demonstrated, a common reaction to job stressors and the effects of burnout is to withdraw from colleagues and avoid contact with others. This is a counterproductive response in education, as teachers feel more successful when they are able to work with colleagues in a collaborative, open culture that is supported by administration (Boyd et al., 2011; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). Teachers who experience support from their peers are less likely to leave teaching (Billingsley, 1993; Hancock & Scherff, 2010).

Good relations with colleagues can potentially improve a teachers’ sense of belonging, resulting in reduced emotional exhaustion and increased job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011a). The impact of support, or the lack thereof, by colleagues can impact several areas of a teacher’s professional experience (Boyd et al., 2011). A supportive climate from colleagues and administrators can reduce symptoms of burnout, increase job satisfaction, and improve a teachers’ self-concept (Boyd et al, 2011; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017c). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2015) also were able to show that even though teaming with colleagues can potentially produce conflicts, if the colleagues are supportive, it can produce “…enjoyment and job satisfaction.”

Parents. Parents comprise an important community to which teachers must relate. Parents can provide positive support, helping to build the teacher’s feelings of self-efficacy or they can be a challenge, increasing the emotional exhaustion experienced by the teacher (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Johnson et al., 2005). Relations with parents have been shown to be related to all dimensions of teacher burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik,
and to serve a mediating role in the way that supervisory support is related to burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). Support and respect from both parents and students have been shown to play a significant role in teacher decisions to remain in teaching (Boyd et al., 2011; Hughes, 2012). A supportive relationship with parents can improve a teacher’s sense of belonging and job satisfaction, resulting in reduced emotional exhaustion, improving self-efficacy, and mitigating thoughts of leaving (Hughes, 2012; Johnson et al., 2005; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011b).

New teachers are rarely trained or prepared to deal with parents who are forceful or vocal (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009), which is unfortunate. Parents can put more pressure on teachers to be perfect than colleagues, students, or the teachers themselves (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). This can increase levels of stress and burnout (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Pressure from parents and students has been shown to increase teachers’ feelings of reduced personal accomplishment (Farber, 1999; Miller, 1999; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010, 2011b, 2018). Teachers have expressed that a lack of parental participation and support is one of the least desirable aspects of a teaching career (Byrd-Blake et al., 2010). Knowing how to develop positive relationships based on mutual respect and feedback helps teachers and parents develop a spirit of teamwork and better meet the needs of students (Johnson et al., 2005).

**Administration.** Administrative inputs, whether positive, negative, or absent, can play a large role in teacher stress levels, self-efficacy, burnout, and thoughts of leaving the profession (Boyd at al., 2011; Clandinin et al., 2015; Guarino et al., 2006). Teachers try to find schools where they know that they will be treated as professionals and be appreciated and supported (Brill & McCartney, 2008). During pre-service experiences,
administrative guidance and feedback have been shown to reduce stress and increase confidence levels among pre-service teachers (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). Beginning teachers typically enter the profession highly motivated and are quickly involved in school life. Within their first two years, they experience less stress and increased self-efficacy when they receive productive guidance and input from administrators and/or mentors in induction programs (Hong, 2010).

When teachers feel that they are allowed to make decisions and that reasonable decisions will be supported by building level administrators, teacher commitment rises (Hancock & Scherff, 2010; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011). Studies have shown that teacher autonomy in the classroom, coupled with supervisory support, are major factors in teacher job satisfaction (Billingsley, 1993; Boyd et al., 2011; Guarino et al., 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Administrators who make teachers feel valued and that they are needed and play an important role in the school mission, and who support collegiality among staff have been shown to mitigate teacher intentions of leaving (Hancock & Scherff, 2010; Johnson et al., 2005). Johnson et al. (2005) suggest that principals focus on including teachers in school improvement projects and in supportive collaboration among staff members.

Teachers who do not experience the autonomy they need to develop the teaching curriculum they feel will make a difference will often become disillusioned and begin to experience the symptoms of burnout (Pines, 1993). Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009) demonstrated the importance of teacher autonomy in mitigating the effect of supervisor support on all three dimensions of burnout as well as job satisfaction. There is a trend in some areas of contemporary educational philosophy to give teachers scheduled, scripted
lessons with little or no allowance for variation. Teachers complain that this type of curriculum not only removes their capacity for creativity in the instructional process, but also limits them in putting into place practices that support the values and methods they feel are most needed by their students (Maslach, 1993). Teachers seek to be regarded as the professionals they are and to not have their hands tied. Teachers who are given more autonomy in their classroom, particularly new teachers, will self-engage in more growth opportunities and tend to exercise better control on their classrooms (Leithwood & Beatty, 2008). Unfortunately, within the current environment of increased administrative oversight, coupled with diminished classroom autonomy, the mitigating effect of self-efficacy on burnout is decreasing (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009).

Seasoned teachers show higher levels of self-efficacy and less stress related outputs when interacting productively with administrators (Ware & Kitsantas, 2011). Boyd et al. (2011) found that support from administrators served as one of the key predictors of teacher attrition. Limited administrative support is related to depersonalization in teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010), though only after being mediated by parent relations and the degree of autonomy a teacher experiences in the classroom (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). In a study of teachers in Hong Kong, researchers found that supervisory support is directly related to intentions of quitting and is indirectly related to quitting due to emotional exhaustion (Leung & Lee, 2006; Pas et al., 2012).

Regular, supportive communication with administrators has been shown to reduce attrition, particularly when coupled with a potential for advancement (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Chan et al. (2008) demonstrated that building a cohesive culture of education within a school and clarifying the school mission can improve teacher
retention. Likewise, schools with a better administrative support structure were shown to have a lower level of teacher turnover in a study by Ingersoll (2001). In building a cohesive culture within a school, when school administrators show greater participation and interest in school activities, teachers have been shown to become more active and to be more engaged (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008).

**Salary and Compensation**

Historically, teaching has been considered a woman’s profession and it was felt that women did not need the salary men received, as men were typically also supporting a family (Santoro, 2018). Today, many potential teachers are choosing other professions because teacher salaries are still among the lowest for all professions requiring a college degree (Clandinin et al., 2015; Johnson et al., 2005). Allegretto (2022) recently cited evidence that the weekly wages teachers receive falls 23.5% behind that received by other college graduates. Low pay has been hypothesized as a factor the decision of teachers to leave the profession (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Boyd et al., 2011; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Olsen & Anderson, 2007). In a review of studies on teacher retention and recruitment, Guarino et al. (2006) found that the majority of the research in their review indicated a positive relationship between adequate teacher salaries and retention. In a meta-analysis of teacher attrition and retention, Borman and Dowling (2008) suggest that higher pay for teachers can serve as a powerful incentive to remain in the profession.

On the other hand, in a study using data from the Schools and Staffing Survey as well as the follow-up supplement, the Teacher Follow-up Survey, Ingersoll (2001) found that higher levels of pay did not always significantly reduce teacher attrition. Brill and McCartney (2008) found that the most significant factors used to improve teacher
retention are not based on salary and that when salary is used to retain teachers, it must be a significant increase, since minor increases were ineffective. Abd-El-Fattah (2010) demonstrated that even significant increases in pay will not always have a significant impact on teachers’ job satisfaction.

Improving other conditions, particularly administrative support, go further toward mitigating the negative effects of low salaries (Kersaint et al., 2007). Pines (1993, p. 39) pointed out that “Burnout most often happens to people who initially cared most about the people they work with and least about their paychecks.” Improved working conditions and greater support would have a greater impact on teacher retention than higher pay (Johnson et al., 2005). Johnson et al. (2005) cited that low salaries and the need to buy supplies for the classroom because they are not provided, as they would be in other professions, can produce a doubly negative impact on teacher job satisfaction. Betoret (2006) reported that teachers with better self-efficacy and better access to supplies and support were less likely to report symptoms of burnout than teachers with lower self-efficacy and limited access to materials and support.

**Classroom Management**

Successful management of a classroom includes, but is not limited to, managing student behavior, particularly that of disruptive students. Additionally, classroom management includes skills typically ascribed to project managers. This includes scheduling, budgeting, ordering/providing supplies, progress monitoring and evaluation, and reporting that includes minor interim reports as well as final reporting. In addition to this, teachers are required to prepare and deliver lessons that meet a mandated set of assessments. Few teachers arrive with this set of skills intact, ready to manage a class
effectively. Most rely on school leaders to help them develop the skills they need to manage classrooms, and they express disappointment and feeling of stress when such assistance is not forthcoming (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009).

The most frequently mentioned classroom management stressor found in this review of the professional literature is that of student discipline and behavior. Disciplinary issues are often listed as one of the top factors’ teachers most dislike about their job (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Byrd-Blake et al., 2010; Clandinin et al., 2015). Teachers enter the profession to make a difference in kids’ lives, to share their joy of learning, and to follow in the footsteps of those they admired, whether a relative or a favorite teacher (Pines, 1993). Once in the classroom, they encounter discipline problems, as they anticipated. But often, the discipline issues are much larger and different than they anticipated, taking much more of their teaching time than they had originally planned for (Johnson et al., 2005).

Boyd et al. (2011) found that student behavior is a major predictor of teacher attrition. Frustrations that rise when students lack aptitude or teachers have minimal or no prior training can lead them to feel that they lack the ability to teach the required curriculum and reduce their feelings of self-efficacy (Johnson et al., 2005). When student behavior keeps a teacher from feeling that they are achieving success in their job, that they are significant, then that teacher will begin to feel incompetent and ineffective in their job (Pines, 1993). Students entering the classroom unprepared or unmotivated to learn present another challenge to all teachers, but particularly to early career and pre-service teachers who have not yet developed the strategies and skills to deal with such issues (Boyd et al., 2011). Teachers consider student disciplinary issues as feedback on
their teaching abilities, which can result in decreased teacher professional self-efficacy and lead to emotional exhaustion and depersonalization behaviors toward students (Johnson et al., 2005). Teachers who have left the profession have cited a lack of administrative support in dealing with and enforcing disciplinary plans as a reason they had no intention of returning (Betoret, 2006; Kersaint et al., 2007).

**School Climate**

The organizational structure of educational systems, whether districts or schools, can promote or hinder self-efficacy in teachers (Ingersoll, 2001). Teacher perceptions of their school climate have been shown to potentially have a positive relationship to teacher collaboration, relations to students, efficacy in managing student behavior, and job satisfaction (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016). Schools in many areas, but particularly urban inner-city schools, have difficulties attracting qualified teachers. As such, teachers in these schools will often find themselves teaching classes for which they are not trained, contributing to dissatisfaction with their job and increased consideration of leaving (Johnson et al., 2005).

Ethnicity has also been shown to be a factor in teacher attrition. Schools with a predominantly minority student body have reported teacher attrition rates almost three times that found in majority-white schools (Sutcher et al., 2016). High-poverty, high-minority schools, particularly those in urban, inner-city districts, are among the first impacted by teacher shortages, often using underqualified persons to fill teaching vacancies (Sutcher et al., 2016). Underprepared new teachers are much less likely to experience success in the classroom and will have lower self-efficacy, leading them to leave teaching (Carver-Thomas & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The school climate coupled
with poor pay and inadequate preparation can lead teachers in these schools to leave at a higher rate than that observed in other districts.

A lack of materials and space has also been shown to contribute to teacher ideations of leaving teaching or of changing schools or careers (Johnson et al., 2005). Borman and Dowling (2008) found that a $500 per student reduction in spending on instruction increased the chances of teacher attrition by 5.38 times in lower funded schools over schools with higher levels of funding. Teachers have cited a lack of materials and a lack of adequate facilities in which to teach as factors that make them feel underappreciated (Brill & McCartney, 2008).

Inner-city schools, located in areas of low socio-economic status (SES) are typically in poor physical condition and have facility problems with plumbing, electricity, playground and the structure itself. In 2014, only 8.6% of funding in school districts, on average, came from the federal government (OECD, 2017). The remainder is provided through state and local sources. At the state level, funding is done through a series of funding formulas that often do not fund districts equally. Local funding is often calculated using the tax base from the community in which schools are located. Both state and local funding frequently underfund schools located in poorer or urban districts (OCED, 2017). While more recent legislation has pushed funding in districts back to the state level, many districts have reduced funding, correspondingly, resulting in little gain (Peterson, 2010). Consequently, schools in poorer, urban settings still have lower tax revenues to draw from than do schools in more affluent neighborhoods (Putnam, 2015). School funding formulas vary from state to state, but are often based on the local tax base, as stated earlier. In underfunded districts, support for extracurricular activities is
done through private contribution, if at all (Putnam, 2015). Logic would indicate that
teachers in these areas would experience burnout and attrition at higher rates. Borman
and Dowling (2008) found that teacher attrition in schools with more than 20% of the
student body qualifying for free or reduced-priced meals was 1.73 times greater than that
for schools with less than 20% qualifying for free and reduced lunches.

**Time and Workload Demands**

While the public perception is often that teachers work short days and have ample
vacation time, the truth is that most teachers work in the evenings and on weekends
grading, preparing for classes, and completing other tasks for which they do not have
time during the teaching day (Byrne, 1999; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017b, 2017c). Most
early career teachers find themselves working evenings and weekends just to get the job
done, even though they are warned to maintain a balance between home and job
(Clandinin et al., 2015).

Many teachers use vacation time to prepare for new classes, to attend training and
workshops, and writing, developing, and modifying curriculum. Teachers cite the
workload as a major stressor in their job (Brill & McCartney, 2008). Often, the workload
and lack of family time is given as a reason for leaving the profession (Olsen &
Anderson, 2007). Among teachers who have left the profession, the amount of time
teaching takes away from their family and family responsibilities was shown to be a
major factor (Kersaint et al., 2007).

Just as teacher feelings of efficacy increase when there were fewer disruptions in
their planned teaching process, extra duties and reporting requirements are stressors that
reduce teacher feelings of personal accomplishment (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). Kersaint
et al. (2007) demonstrated that increased paperwork demands associated with high-stakes testing has resulted in increased stress, as reported by current teachers and those who have left the profession. One of the most common complaints new teachers have about teaching is the demands it places on their personal time. Some describe feeling as if they are in a battle between their family and career (Clandinin et al., 2015). In a study of early career teachers, Fantilli and McDougall (2009) found that over half the teachers who felt that they hadn’t been given adequate time to prepare to teach considered quitting. As teachers develop better time management skills, the stress of workload and time demands diminishes, but doesn’t go away (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009).

**High-Stakes Teacher Evaluations**

As with most professional careers, teachers participate in annual growth discussions with administrators and use those discussions to plan their professional development activities. Teachers acknowledge that evaluation in some form is necessary, but they have mixed feelings about the fairness, objectivity, and relevance of evaluation systems currently in use (Donaldson, 2012). Early in public schooling in the United States, John Dewey (1897) proposed that teaching was best accomplished by doing and, by extension, we might assume that he would also propose that teachers also learn best when encouraged to “…think about their teaching in ways that stimulated their own learning” (Hazi & Rucinski, 2009).

However, increasing demand for rigid measures of educational accountability, particularly over the past two decades, have brought about new models for educational accountability (Danielson, 2013; Darling-Hammond, 2013, Grissom & Youngs, 2016; Marzano & Toth, 2013; Silverberg & Jungwirth, 2014) with mixed opinions and results.
Studies have indicated that the accountability policies implemented with the most recent rounds of education reform might be leading to attrition in lower performing schools (Guarino et al., 2006). Most teachers express concerns that the effects of NCLB are not positively impacting education (Byrd-Blake et al., 2010). Following on the heels of NCLB, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has failed to reach the goals (Espinoza et al., 2018) set for itself in terms of student progress as scores on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) were flat during the 2010 decade (The Nation’s Report Card, 2022). Any gains that may have been made were lost during the COVID-19 pandemic as test scores have plunged “to levels unseen for decades” (St. George, 2022).

Most evaluation models in use today are designed following guidelines of two or three primary models using multiple measures. Among the most commonly used multiple-measure models are those developed by Danielson (2013) and Marzano and Toth (2013). Darling-Hammond (2013) proposed considerations to be incorporated when implementing teacher evaluation models. Working to achieve goals set for student test scores can be a stressor to teachers. In fact, a study by Ware & Kitsantas (2011) indicated that meeting goals such as those prescribed by high-stakes testing and evaluation had no significant impact on teacher commitment. Teachers express the pressure that comes from high-stakes testing and teaching for the test as one of the constructs they most dislike and that leads them to consider leaving the teaching profession (Boyd et al., 2011; Byrd-Blake et al., 2010). Teacher morale has diminished since implementation of NCLB (Byrd-Blake et al., 2010).

To meet the full intent of NCLB, ESSA, and RTT, VAM measures have been incorporated into most models for teacher evaluation where they can count, in some
cases, for as much as 50% of a teacher’s evaluation (Silverberg & Jungwirth, 2014).

VAM, as used in this case, is used to measure the learning contributed by individual teachers and the longevity of that learning. Value Added Modeling [VAM] and Adequate Yearly Progress [AYP] are two additional methods used to determine teacher and school efficacy. VAM is a complex series of statistical calculations designed to track student performance for a period and to rate a teachers’ effectiveness, based on the assumption that such measures yield information on how much “value” the teacher added to the students’ learning, by how well that student performs on tests in subsequent years (McCaffrey et al., 2003). Hypothetically, VAM can isolate and disaggregate teacher effects from non-educational effects, such as socio-economic status, family, gender, ethnicity, etc. (McCaffrey et al., 2003). “Value-added models (VAM’s) attempt to mathematically model student growth and then attribute that growth to specific teachers or schools” (Whiteman et al., 2011, p. 7). It does make sense that accountability would include measures of the educational system components (principals, teachers, etc.) that require evaluation based on the value of the knowledge they add (knowledge value added) because of their work (Whiteman et al., 2011).

Motivational theory “…holds that the extrinsic rewards and sanctions associated with high stakes test can be used to motivate school faculty members to improve performance” (Supovitz, 2009, p. 214). VAM can be a strong formative tool. However, there are questions regarding the validity of VAM as a summative assessment tool (Whiteman et al., 2011). Au (2011) cited statistical errors as high as 35% when testing data from one year is used to evaluate teacher effectiveness. When using three consecutive years, this error rate is still at 25%. Additionally, Au (2011) pointed out
instability in the test scores on a year-to-year as on a day-to-day basis, the influence of out-of-school factors on test scores, and the use of VAM testing as a political tool as reasons to question the use of VAM assessment models.

Good teachers make a lasting impact on their students. That impact should include growth in learning. One way to evaluate teacher effectiveness is to look at the long-term impact they have on their students and their students’ knowledge retention. An analysis of this long-term effect might provide a more comprehensive view of teacher effectiveness than the more traditional snapshot-in-time method provided by once-a-year standardized tests (Amrein-Beardsley, 2008). The move to VAM testing has resulted in a shift from norm-referenced tests to criterion-referenced tests (Amrein-Beardsley, 2008). Additionally, there has been a significant lack of studies of the validity of the VAM model used, as well as a lack of external reviews (Amrein-Beardsley, 2008). The VAM model put forward pushes for continually increasing test scores, ignoring the tendency of scores to regress to the mean.

Students face many impacts, influences, and inputs in their daily life. Is it possible for a single model to truly control for all variables in a students’ life? “VAM models assume that tests measure the full range of achievement and that students are randomly assigned to teachers, neither of which is true in the real world” (Darling-Hammond, 2013, pp. 76-77). Many inputs impact student learning output, creating a complex evaluation situation. What happens in the “black box” of teacher evaluation tends to be hazy, unknown, and not well understood (Whiteman et al., 2011). Measuring the effectiveness of a teacher from a single test assumes that they are the only factor or teacher impacting student learning, that learning is independent of classmates and of classroom context, and
that the VAM model can control for such variables as endocrinology, physiology, sociology and many other factors that feed into a students’ daily existence (Darling-Hammond et al, 2012, p. 8). The teacher is only one variable among many in a students’ life and “Ratings based on VAMs can’t disentangle the many influences on student progress” (Marsano & Toth, 2013, p. 7). By taking a snapshot-in-time, high-stakes tests may capture or omit the effects of variables that were unintended or unaccounted for (Farber, 2010). Teachers do much more than spew facts for students to capture and later regurgitate, as is the assumed model for standardized testing. The Measures of Effective Teaching (MET) study (Northern & Fairchild, 2013) used multiple measures of assessing teacher effectiveness, including gains in student scores on standardized tests, teacher reflections and observations of the classrooms, teacher knowledge of pedagogical content, perceptions of the classroom environment by students, and teacher perceptions of instructional support and working conditions at their school (Northern & Fairchild, 2013). This yielded better results than a single VAM exam (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Test design companies, as well as education administrators in the highest levels seem to have forgotten that standardized tests were not designed to measure teacher quality which is different than student achievement.

Inconsistencies in VAM calculations of teacher quality have been reported. Instances of dramatic changes from one year to another were noted in Marsano and Toth (2013). While these swings in results may be based on actual teacher performance, they also may be due to errors or changes in measurement (Glazerman et al., 2010). VAM is a method of statistical modeling for which there are multiple methods of calculation, depending on what is to be emphasized (Amrein-Beardsley, 2008; Glazerman et al, 2010;
McCaffrey et al., 2003; Paige, 2016). The progress of students performing near grade-
level on a grade-level criterion referenced assessment can be measured with relative
accuracy. However, the further a student performance is from the expected grade level,
the more difficult it is to obtain an accurate measure (Amrein-Beardsley, 2008). An
unfortunate point that seems to be missed by many advocates of using student test scores
to rate teacher quality is that student performance is not the same thing as teacher quality.
Teacher quality encapsulates many more traits than student performance on standardized

There is a tendency, as a result of standards-based accountability measures and
the neo-conservative reform movement to view teachers as “human capital” (Whiteman
et al., 2011). This “human capital” conceptual framework is based on the idea that growth
in the knowledge economy stems from the knowledge, ideas, and capital contained in the
workers, therefore “human capital.” The concept of teachers as “human capital”
deprofessionalizes them and neglects or dismisses important parts of what teachers do
beyond the delivery of instruction in the classroom. This includes using personal funds to
purchase supplies, comforting students who are ill, have had some form of emotional
trauma, or who have injured themselves.

Teachers report feeling deprofessionalized as their important work is reduced to a
set of data consisting primarily of student test scores (Brown & Clift, 2010; Byrd-Blake
et al., 2010; Crocco & Costigan, 2007). Deprofessionalization causes teachers to question
their own sense of professional worth (Minarechavá, 2012). Teachers who trained to
consider the needs of all students and to exercise professional creativity in their class
design will begin to focus more and more on test areas, leading to a narrowing of the
Some positive effects have been noted in schools that use VAM in assessing teacher effectiveness. “Students assigned to high-VA teachers are more likely to attend college, attend higher-ranked colleges, earn higher salaries, live in higher SES neighborhoods, and save more for retirement. They are also less likely to have children as teenagers” (Chetty et al., 2014, p. 1). On the surface, this may sound great, but it indicates one of the truths that becomes glaringly apparent when looking at high stakes testing as a measure of teacher quality. Students from higher SES neighborhoods will go to better schools, will score higher on standardized exams, and will have better opportunities for authentic learning. An improvement of just one standard deviation in teacher value added scores has been shown to raise a students’ potential earnings by 1% at age 28 (Chetty et al., 2014). Providing average teachers in the place of those in the lower 5% of value added could potentially result in an increase in lifetime income for students of over a quarter of a million dollars. One obvious benefit of good teachers is that good teachers create substantial economic value and that test score impacts are helpful in identifying such teachers (Chetty et al., 2014). However, students from poorer areas will likely not see these benefits.

Even with all the potential benefits that have been touted for high-stakes testing, value added modeling, and punitive measures used in response to less than favorable evaluation results, teacher morale is at a historic low (Paige, 2016). The cumulative effect of deprofessionalizing teaching, evaluations based on factors over which teachers have no control such as class size, evaluation model and test used, topics tested, etc., and having
their entire career reduced to little more than a cumulative score from annual student
testing has left many teachers emotionally exhausted and doubting their own efficacy in
the profession. In a recent survey, teachers indicated that the pressures associated with
teaching to the demands of high-stake testing and the consequences of that testing as the
thing they most dislike about their work, ahead of problems with parental involvement,
discipline, and trying to teach students who were performing far below their grade level
(Byrd-Blake et al., 2010). Most teachers do not believe that NCLB had a positive effect
on teaching and learning and indicated that their morale was lower in 2007 than it was in
2001, the year after NCLB came into being (Byrd-Blake et al, 2010).

The concerns expressed by many teachers regarding high stakes testing centers on
the impact it has on students. In some cases, their concern centers on pacing guides in the
classroom that have resulted in a movement away from high order thinking to focus on
test style (multiple choice) evaluations and discrete skills (Brown & Clift, 2010).

Mandated curriculum pacing, to meet the demands of covering material for high-stakes
tests, has caused teachers to be concerned over losing their autonomy and over losing
students who could not keep up with the aggressive pace (Boyd et al., 2011; Brown &
Clift, 2010; Guarino et al., 2006). Incentives have been offered, as motivation, to schools
failing to make AYP. Nevertheless, many staff and administrators saw little hope and
resigned themselves to the continued failure of their school. (Brown & Clift, 2010).

High-stakes testing has been shown to have numerous impacts on the educational
process. Texas, home state of President G.W. Bush and trial ground for what would
become NCLB, has seen an increase in teacher attrition since the passage and
implementation of NCLB (Sass et al., 2012). NCLB was implemented as a mechanism to
improve student success, but increased teacher attrition is instead reducing the number of highly qualified teachers available (Sass et al., 2012). Supovitz (2009) proposed Motivational Theory as one of the key underpinning theories that would support test-based accountability for teachers. Motivational theories range from Maslow’s Need Hierarchy to theories of reward and consequence, many comparing intrinsic and extrinsic motivators. However, motivational theory, in the current high-stakes environment, operates from a deficit perspective, in which there is an inherent lack of motivation to improve, and therefore incentives, or punitive measures, must be used to correct the problem.

High stakes testing and faulty evaluation models have a negative impact on teacher self-efficacy. Self-efficacy and burnout are related, most often through the dimension of emotional exhaustion (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Fives et al, 2007; Khani & Mirzaee, 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011b; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Burnout and low self-efficacy can lead to depersonalization, especially if the teacher begins to blame students for low test results and evaluations. This can be particularly true with student subgroups that account for a school not making AYP (McDermott, 2013). Low self-efficacy, depersonalization, and emotional exhaustion can result in lowered job achievement for the teacher, feeding a lack of commitment and possibly even to the teacher leaving the profession (McDermott, 2013).

**Professional Burnout**

Maslach (1993, p. 20) described professional burnout as “…a psychological syndrome of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced professional accomplishment that can occur among individuals who work with other people in some
capacity.” Working with others, whether as a nurse, a social worker, or as a teacher, is an exhausting task, typically accompanied by large workloads, stressful situations, and low pay. Those who chose careers in the human services are usually looking to devote their lives to something they feel is making a difference in the lives of others, that what they do is important (Pines, 1993). So long as they are seeing that their work produces a positive difference, they are strong productive workers. However, if situations keep them from feeling that they can meet other’s needs, workers show signs of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced professional accomplishment as they begin to experience burnout (Maslach, 1993; Pines, 1993). Burnout is the end product of growing disillusionment resulting from experiencing failure to meet the needs of students, patients, or clients (Pines, 1993).

Pines (1993) proposed an existential model for burnout in which those who enter human service careers do so from a need to know that their mortal existence matters, that their work is important and makes a difference in the lives of others. They feel that if their work makes a difference, then they make a difference as well (Pines, 1993). When a teacher succeeds at their job, they see it as a personal success. Conversely, when work related failure occurs, even if this is due to variables beyond the influence or control of the teacher, teachers still experience it as a personal failure (Pines, 1993).

Because burnout is a consequence of not meeting high personal expectations, it has been described as a phenomenon usually experienced by those who are highly motivated and seeking to make a difference initially (Pines, 1993). Most teachers will experience symptoms similar to those of burnout at some point. However, several authors have pointed out that not everything that appears to be burnout is actually burnout. These
conditions have also been attributed to stress, depression, fatigue, or demoralization (Pines, 1993; Santoro, 2013, 2018). Pines (1993) cited these causes among those who were not highly motivated initially as teachers, as only those who had high expectations initially in their career would be able to experience the disillusionment that brings about burnout. To reiterate, according to Pines, “…only highly motivated individuals can burn out” (Pines, 1993).

Burnout has often been mistaken for depression. Burnout occurs in those who enter a career highly motivated and desiring to make a difference for others, whereas depression strikes people who are highly motivated as well as those who are lacking in motivation (Pines, 1993). While counseling and clinical approaches to depression tend to focus on medication and a focus on the client’s past experiences, even into childhood, counseling for burnout will focus more on the factors that keep a teacher from feeling relevant, efficacious, and that they make a difference in their classroom (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009; Pines, 1993).

Santoro (2013, 2018) has proposed that what is often perceived to be burnout is actually demoralization. The symptoms, as explained by Santoro (2013), are very similar in that both will lead a teacher to feel exhausted from the effort of trying to do their job. Santoro (2018) cites internal conflict that teachers experience when the job they are required to do, the methods they are to use in class, and the goals they are told to set for their students’ conflict with their own moral motivators, or what they feel is most important for their students. These conflicting values, according to Santoro (2013, 2018) will lead to demoralization, rather than burnout. The conflict of values described by
Santoro (2018) is much like that studied by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011a, 2011b, 2017a) in Norway.

Studies have considered the impact of values conflicts on self-efficacy, (Hong, 2012), job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011a, 2011b) and intent to leave teaching (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011b). While the narrative nature of Santoro’s (2018) study does give teacher voice to the issue of value conflicts, very few of the citations refer to actual empirical studies or the classical treatises on burnout, such as those by Maslach (1993, 2003), Maslach et al. (1996), Maslach and Leiter (1997, 1999), and Maslach et al. (2001). Values conflicts create a conundrum for teachers who are highly motivated to make a difference, as was pointed out by Santoro (2018) and Huberman and Vandenberghe (1999). Santoro’s (2018) asserted that some teachers who lack a higher, or more rigorous, values set will probably not experience demoralization, paralleling the assertion of Huberman and Vandenberghe (1999) that only highly motivated teachers will experience burnout. The set of symptoms Santoro ascribes to demoralization have been described both quantitatively (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011a, 2011b, 2017a) and qualitatively (Hong, 2012; Nias, 1999; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2015) as components of burnout, particularly in Maslach’s (1993) reduced personal accomplishment dimension of burnout. The number of studies citing values conflicts and similar stressors as a potential cause of burnout among teachers leads me to propose that what Santoro (2018) calls demoralization should be described as a set of characteristics on a continuum of teacher disaffection that ends with burnout. A demoralized teacher will feel that they may not be making the difference that they once did or that they had hoped to make. Santoro’s own work would support this premise, in that she does propose that continued demoralization might lead to
burnout (2018). For the purposes of this study, the term “burnout”, as described by Maslach et al. (1996), consisting of the dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced professional accomplishment, will be used. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009, 2010) and Buunk and Schaufeli (1993) found that these three dimensions operate independently and should be addressed as such when studying burnout. This study will focus specifically on the dimension of emotional exhaustion.

Our knowledge of burnout and its effects has continued to grow since the early studies that began in the 1970’s (Huberman & Vandenberghe, 1999). In today’s world of high stakes testing and teacher accountability, burnout continues to be a primary concern among professionals who work in human services capacities, such as teachers (Huberman, 1999; Khani & Mirzaee, 2015; Maslach et al., 2001; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2009, 2017b). Almost all teachers will, at various points throughout their career, experience effects, or symptoms, that are due to, or are similar to, those resulting from burnout (Fives et al., 2007).

Teacher burnout can result from how educators view themselves in their career and can also impact how they see themselves within their career in the future (Maslach et al., 2001). Consequently, the teaching profession has been a focus of burnout research for the past four decades, and that research has continued as new paradigms in education appear to be driving more teachers to the point of burnout (Aloe et al., 2014; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Fives et al., 2007; Friesen & Sarros, 1989; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Huberman, 1993; Khani & Mirzaee, 2015; Leung & Lee, 2006; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009, 2010, 2017a; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008; Wang et al., 2015). With the large number of hours teachers invest in their job much of their personal
identity and life meaning is tied up in what they do. Burnout can result if they feel that they are not making a difference in their job (Pine, 1993).

Maslach et al. (1996) developed the Maslach Burnout Inventory [MBI] as a scale to measure these three dimensions. Acceptance of the MBI within the research community has been demonstrated by its use in multiple studies and its adaptation for use in multiple countries (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Fernet et al., 2012; Fives et al., 2007; Leung & Lee, 2006; Maslach et al., 2001; Pas et al., 2012; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2009, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c). The MBI will be discussed further in the chapter on methodology.

**Emotional Exhaustion**

Of the three dimensions of burnout, emotional exhaustion is most frequently reported and, consequently, is the one most commonly studied (Maslach et al., 2001). Teachers suffering from emotional exhaustion are exhausted and emotionally overextended as they go about their job (Maslach, et al., 1996). Grayson and Alvarez (2008) described emotional exhaustion as a tiredness that deepens over time as the situations one encounters at work begin to act as an emotional drain. An emotionally exhausted teacher will feel as if they have given all they can to their job (Fives et al., 2007). They will feel as if their energy resources have been depleted and that there is little, if any, more that they can to do be effective in their classroom (Fernet et al., 2012).

Emotional exhaustion has been shown to interact differentially with the two other dimensions of burnout as well as with the characteristics of self-efficacy and other personality characteristics. Buunk and Schaufeli (1993) studied the interactions of the three dimensions of burnout, emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced
personal accomplishment, with elements of self-efficacy and other personality characteristics of concern in nurses. They found that lower levels of uncertainty on the job buffered the effect of nurse reactivity on emotional exhaustion, particularly among those described as being highly reactive. This indicated that those who were most sensitive to stress were most likely to experience the symptoms of emotional exhaustion (Buunk & Schaufeli, 1993).

An exhausted teacher lacks the energy to adequately prepare lessons for classes, to deal with disciplinary issues, or to deal with aggressive or assertive parents, colleagues, or administrators (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000). Because one symptom is a loss of energy and motivation, emotional exhaustion can be mistaken for apathy, as the teacher lacks to energy to successfully do their job. Hancock and Scherff (2010) described apathy in English teachers as a predictor of attrition. Symptoms such as missed days at work, disappointment in work, stress, loss of enthusiasm for teaching, and overall disappointment with their job, when viewed through the lens of burnout described by Maslach et al. (2001), are likely attributable to the emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment dimensions of burnout.

**Depersonalization**

Depersonalization is characterized by a cynical, indifferent, callus attitude toward others (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). In education, this often expresses itself in a form of cynicism that can be directed at students, colleagues, administration, or at the school community as a whole (Fives et al., 2007). As teachers experience the symptoms of burnout, they may become uncaring toward their students. When this happens, teachers will begin to respond impersonally to students when correcting behaviors and when
engaging with students in everyday interactions. This includes treating students in a demeaning manner. When seen in teachers, these behaviors are indicative of depersonalization (Maslach et al., 1996).

Buunk and Schaufeli (1993) posit that depersonalization is the only of the three dimensions of burnout that is related directly to self-esteem and is more commonly found in nurses who have low self-esteem. However, low self-esteem does not necessarily mean that a teacher is becoming burned out. Depersonalization can also result from a lack of skill in student engagement and a lack of instructional strategy rather than burnout (Fives et al., 2007; Khani & Mirzaee, 2015). Care must be taken in assuming that a teacher who exhibits the trait of depersonalization is experiencing the symptoms of burnout.

Empathy and caring are important parts of who a teacher is, of what they do, and of how they make a difference for their students (Rudow, 1999). Professionals who provide for the needs of their patients, students, or clients but have no expectation for their work to be reciprocated (Buunk & Schaufeli, 1993) have very little danger of developing the symptoms of depersonalization. However, this is not often the case for teachers (Rudow, 1999). Teachers may be the only adult a student encounters during a day who cares about them. This level of emotional, and sometimes physical, responsibility will eventually take its toll on teachers.

Burned out teachers who are experiencing depersonalization will have trouble expressing or feeling empathy toward students who need it, seeing students more as objects rather than as humans with needs (Maslach, 2003). Depersonalizing teachers may also write lessons from the standpoint of completing a list of standards, rather than attempting to design lessons that meet the real needs of their students, distancing
themselves from students whose needs they are unable to meet (Maslach, 1993). Consequently, depersonalization can result in gaps in the educational experience of students.

**Reduced Professional Accomplishment**

Teachers who are burning out often state that their role lacks significance and they are no longer making a difference in the education and lives of their students. They feel that they are not making an impact, and that they are not achieving what they hoped to as teachers (Maslach, 1999; Pines, 1993). According to Grayson and Alvarez (2008), teachers who feel that they are no longer contributing to the development and growth of their students are experiencing reduced personal accomplishment. Emotional exhaustion in teachers can make it difficult to pull together enough energy to plan, to interact with others, act as an advocate for students, or deal with problem students (Maslach, 2003). This lack of ability to perform the tasks they need to do, the tasks that were easier earlier in their career, lead teachers to a feeling of reduced accomplishment.

Teachers can reach a point in their career where they no longer have the energy to do the job as they once did. Teachers who were once quite successful in their career begin to feel that they are no longer able to accomplish what seemed to come much easier in their career (Maslach, 2003). Teachers experiencing feelings of reduced professional accomplishment will begin to anticipate retirement, spend time looking for other jobs, or looking elsewhere for professional meaning (Kelchtermans, 1999). They may become even more ineffective in the classroom and often will leave the profession.
**Burnout in Teachers**

Burnout is a real, relevant issue in teachers’ lives, careers, and in their classrooms. As teachers become more burned out, student behavior will likely worsen, causing conflicts between the students and teacher to worsen (Huberman & Vandenberghe, 1999), increasing the teachers’ cynicism and depersonalization, and causing the teacher to feel that they are not contributing anything in the classroom (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008). As teachers become more burned out, a lack of energy and motivation will make it difficult to perform the tasks they once found to be much easier. Teachers who are experiencing burnout will feel that their efficacy in the classroom is diminishing, and they are correct (Friedman, 1999). Burnout for teachers can become a downward spiral of increased emotional exhaustion, reduced efficacy, increasing depersonalization of students and feelings of hopelessness as they see their skills and accomplishments diminish (Maslach, 2003).

Two of the dimensions of burnout, emotional exhaustion and reduced personal accomplishment, as well as collective efficacy and teacher self-efficacy, relate differentially to teacher job satisfaction (Skaalvik, 2010). They were able to demonstrate that while emotional exhaustion was shown to be a strong predictor of job satisfaction and that reduced accomplishment predicted satisfaction weakly, depersonalization was not related to job satisfaction in their study (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). This study also demonstrated that job satisfaction was not directly related to the stressors, or contextual variables, of time pressure, parent relations, and autonomy. Rather, the relationship of these three was mediated through emotional exhaustion for all three and reduced accomplishment for parent relations and autonomy. In later studies, Skaalvik and
Skaalvik (2017b, 2017c) found that the motivation to quit was directly linked to time pressure, low student motivation, job satisfaction, and burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion. The motivation to quit was indirectly related to autonomy, a supportive social climate, and teaching self-concept when mediated by burnout symptoms and job satisfaction (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017b, 2017c).

Teachers tend to push themselves to be perfect in their classroom (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Failures in the classroom, perceived as imperfections, can increase teacher burnout in all three dimensions, but mostly in emotional exhaustion, rather than in lack of personal accomplishment (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). When a teacher begins to experience the effects of burnout, they also begin to question their abilities in the classroom (Maslach, 2003). They will lack the energy to be effective, these feelings of inefficacy will lead teachers to question their position in the classroom, to challenge their abilities to continue to meet the needs of their students (Friedman, 1999; Maslach, 2003). Teachers will challenge their students to give their best, but if the teacher knows that they, as a teacher, are not doing their best, based on their past abilities, they may begin to feel that their level of professional accomplishment is diminishing (Byrne, 1999).

Other factors beyond the scope of this study have also been shown to play a role in teacher burnout. Personality plays a moderating role in how professionals interact with the dimensions of burnout. Buunk and Schaufeli (1993) demonstrated that such traits as a person’s reactivity to stressors and their self-esteem play a role in how they interact with and experience the effects of burnout. While student behaviors do play a role in burnout, as discussed above, poor classroom management skills can also contribute to burnout and feelings of ineffectiveness and diminished feelings of self-efficacy.
Teacher Self-Efficacy

Teachers are most efficient and effective in the classroom when they have strong, positive professional self-identity (Zee & Koomen, 2016). They feel that they are good at what they do, they are confident in their ability to teach, in their ability to manage a classroom, and they feel that their job is relevant. Professional teacher identity, including professional self-efficacy, has a large influence on how teachers perceive themselves and their ability to do their job. Because of its importance, teacher identity will be woven throughout discussions. Teachers with good self-efficacy and self-esteem also tend to be more resilient (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Strong teacher self-efficacy in the classroom can serve as a predictor of potential job dissatisfaction and thoughts of leaving the profession (Sass et al., 2011).

Self-efficacy is a construct for which studies have provided varied interpretations and meaning. In a classic study of self-efficacy, Bandura (1993, 1995, 1997) proposed that self-efficacy exerts influence through four major processes: cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection. In their Classroom and School Context (CSC) model of self-efficacy, Friedman and Kass (2002) described teacher self-efficacy as being an attribute arising from both the school environment and classroom contexts. Within their model, each context was based on tasks and relations from that context. They described the need of teachers to navigate their role in both school and classroom social constructs. In their study, efficacious teachers performed the appropriate professional and classroom tasks, were engaged in classroom activities such as management and directed at engaging students in learning. Within the school, teachers were expected to be part of the school social and political organization. An efficacious teacher was one who could accomplish
these many tasks. Helms-Lorenz et al. (2012) demonstrated the mediating role that self-efficacy in both classroom and school contexts had on both stress causes and outcomes.

Professional self-efficacy plays a role in teachers’ ability to mitigate the challenges of the classroom. Teachers who strongly believe in their ability to manage the classroom and to effectively engage their students in learning have lower levels of stress, less emotional exhaustion, and have higher job satisfaction (Wang et al., 2015). These teachers also have indicated lower levels of depersonalization and intentions of quitting, emphasizing the importance of teacher perception of their own efficacy in the classroom. Teacher self-efficacy utilizes multiple coping strategies that enable teachers to effectively reduce emotional exhaustion, one of the three dimensions of burnout (Pietarinen et al., 2013). As such, Brouwers and Tomic (2000) have pointed out that is important to consider teacher perceptions of their self-efficacy in the classroom when implementing interventions meant to prevent and to treat burnout.

Hong (2010) described six factors that make up teacher self-identity: value, efficacy, commitment, emotions, knowledge and beliefs, and micropolitics and related these to the effects of burnout. He was able to show that a strong sense of teacher self-identity positively impacted efficacy in pre-service and beginning teachers. Commitment, efficacy, knowledge and beliefs, and micropolitics were shown to be significant factors in the level of emotional exhaustion observed among those who chose to leave teaching early in their career (Hong, 2010). Early career teachers who left the profession scored low in all of these areas. The reasons they cited for leaving were discipline issues, family issues, or the decision to pursue a different career. Hong’s study did not address a specific reason these teachers scored low in these five factors.
Understanding how teachers experience and process the challenges they face as they enter the profession and learning what constructs promote positive self-esteem and help them to develop greater resilience and self-efficacy can help in the design of effective pre-service programs that produce resilient teachers. All teachers bring a degree of professional self-efficacy and a degree of emotional burnout with them from their pre-professional training (Fives et al. 2007; Hong, 2010; Timoštšuk, & Ugaste, 2010). Teachers who enter the profession with stronger self-advocacy skills deal better with the challenges of a teaching career (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011). However, for most teachers entering the classroom as a professional for the first time, these traits are not yet well developed. Many teachers come to the profession from their student teaching experience with diminished feelings of value, efficacy, and commitment, and are less able to deal with the emotions and micropolitics they encounter (Fives et al., 2007). Self-efficacy, including confidence in their abilities in the classroom and a stronger sense of identity as a teacher strengthen as most teachers gain experience in the profession (Fives, et al., 2007). The increased self-efficacy that comes with experience in the classroom mediates the causes and outcomes of job-related stress, including the symptoms of burnout (Helms-Lorenz et al., 2012). This increase in self-efficacy makes teachers more confident in the classroom and less likely to experience burnout and leave the profession (Hong, 2010).

In a study of graduates from a two-year preservice program in Ontario, Canada, Fantilli and McDougall (2009) found that several factors impact early career educators. Among these were supports sponsored by the district, the handling of hiring processes, administrative leadership, and the method by which mentors were selected. Several
studies have demonstrated the importance of a formal mentorship program (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Guarino et al., 2006; Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). Stressors experienced by those with no mentorship program, those with an informal mentor, and those assigned to a formal mentor have been shown to differ (Fantilli & McDougall, 2009). However, it also demonstrated that the process for selecting mentors is often flawed, with volunteers being chosen, regardless of their credentials or training. When properly planned and implemented, mentorship programs are helpful in retaining early-career teachers (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Johnson et al., 2005; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). Formal induction programs designed to provide novice teachers with strong support and trained mentorship reduce attrition during the first five years in the career (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004).

The balance between self-efficacy and burnout is an important factor in the success of pre-service and early career teachers. Pre-service teachers typically enter the classroom for their student teaching experience with low levels of self-efficacy and showing signs of some parameters of burnout, primarily depersonalization (Fives et al., 2007). Most, but not all, pre-service teachers increase in self-efficacy, and signs of burnout usually diminish as they end their pre-service teaching experience (Fives et al., 2007; Hong, 2010). Upon entering the classroom as early-career teachers, faced with new stressors, most again show increased signs of reduced self-efficacy and burnout, particularly in the area of depersonalization (Hong, 2010; Maslach, 2003). As teachers gain experiences through their first few years in the classroom, the symptoms of burnout may be reduced as self-efficacy grows (Hong, 2010). Teachers who have not experienced this growth and who show ever increasing levels of emotional exhaustion and
Some induction programs have proven to help early-career teachers make this transition from new teacher to seasoned teacher with strong professional efficacy (Billingsley, 1993). The literature has shown good programs to have a significant impact on helping new teachers achieve success in the classroom (Helms-Lorenz et al., 2012; Maciejewski, 2007; Smith & Ingersoll, 2004). New teachers who go through a mentorship or a well-planned induction program feel that they are more valued and show less tendency to consider quitting (Clandinin et al., 2015). Studies have shown that the rates of turnover are lower among teachers who go through an induction program early in their career (Guarino et al., 2006).

Unfortunately, the design of mentorship programs is highly variable between school districts. The combination of a good pre-professional program and a well-designed induction program can do a lot for developing a strong sense of self-efficacy in new teachers. However, a bad pre-service experience and a poorly designed and implemented induction program, or no induction program, can result in teachers who enter the profession already burnt out (Fives et al., 2007). Also, even though the value of induction programs to help new teachers as they begin their career is evident, Helms-Lorenz et al. (2012) did not find that self-efficacy was significantly correlated to induction arrangements.

Self-Efficacy/Emotional Exhaustion Balance

In an analysis of 40 years of research, Zee and Koomen (2016) demonstrated that teacher decisions to leave teaching or to stay were not directly related to teacher self-
efficacy. Rather, those who quit experienced higher levels of emotional exhaustion were not as satisfied with or committed to teaching. An inverse relationship between self-efficacy and burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion, has been demonstrated numerous times (Betoret, 2006; Fives et al., 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010, 2017b; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Maslach et al. (2001) proposed that a lack of appropriate, relevant resources would result in teacher feelings of inefficacy, an inability to do the job for which they had devoted their career. This, in turn, would lead to reduced feelings of professional accomplishment.

Positive links have been shown between teacher self-efficacy and classroom quality, student academic adjustment, and the psychological well-being of teachers (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Fives et al. (2007) found that student teachers who had more positive experiences with students built a stronger sense of self-efficacy and, consequently, had higher levels of professional accomplishment. Self-efficacy has also been shown to mediate the potentially stressful effects of stressor constructs (Helms-Lorenz et al, 2012). Self-efficacy mediates the relationship between the dimensions of burnout, particularly emotional exhaustion, and stressful constructs, such as school climate, relationships, and workload (Betoret, 2006; Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017b).

Self-efficacy has been shown to mediate the relationship between the three dimensions of burnout. Brouwers and Tomic (2000) demonstrated a synchronous relationship between emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy. In this model, self-efficacy mediated the synchronous relationship between emotional exhaustion and professional accomplishment and the longitudinal relationship between emotional exhaustion and depersonalization. Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2010) demonstrated a moderate negative
relationship between self-efficacy and both emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, leading them to suggest a reciprocal nature in the relationship between self-efficacy and the dimensions of burnout.

Burnout and a lack of professional self-efficacy lead to poor job performance and attrition in many careers (Maslach & Leiter, 1997; Maslach, 2003; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011b). The use of high-stakes testing in teacher evaluations, the lack of administrative support, and the scoring design of multiple measures teacher evaluations are among the variables that can negatively impact teacher professional identity and, consequently, teacher commitment to the profession (Boyd et al., 2008; Darling-Hammond, 2013). Burnout and diminished teacher self-efficacy are emerging as principal factors influencing commitment and decisions to leave the teaching profession (Bower & Thomas, eds., 2013; Boyd et al., 2008; Brown & Clift, 2010; Byrd-Blake et al., 2010; Crocco & Costigan, 2007; Darling-Hammond, 2013; Day et al., 2005; Farber, 2010; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Minarechová, 2012; Paige, 2016).

**Teacher Commitment and Attrition**

Teachers who experience greater self-efficacy in the classroom suffer less from stress and burnout and are more motivated, more positive, see themselves as more in control of learning and students in their classroom, and are less likely to leave (Farber, 2010; Zee & Koomen, 2016). For teachers who leave the profession early in their career, these characteristics typically were weak, and the teachers were less effective at teaching than those who chose to stay (Henry et al., 2011). Studies demonstrated that the self-efficacy/burnout balance mediates the impact of stressors on teacher job satisfaction and on ideations of leaving teaching (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010, 2011b). Strong professional
self-efficacy can moderate not only the negative impacts of other external inputs to teaching, but also mitigate the negative impacts of the three dimensions of burnout (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Teachers who feel that they are in control of what happens in the classroom are less likely to leave the profession (Wang et al. 2015). The feeling that they have some control over the learning and assessment process is an important factor in feelings of well-being. Attrition is a process, rather than an event. This loss of control, or the feeling that control was never achieved, does not happen suddenly, but rather, is an accumulation of factors (Clandinin et al., 2015).

Attrition in education is a waste of valuable time and money. Teachers train for years, spending thousands of dollars on required education and materials that will no longer be needed or used if they leave the profession. Teacher attrition is estimated to cost school districts throughout the United States five billion dollars per year (Alliance for Excellent Education, 2005). Teacher attrition impacts planning and staffing, resulting in classes that are overcrowded, under-covered, or staffed by unqualified persons as long-term substitutes (Boe et al., 1996; Brill & McCartney, 2008; Johnson et al., 2005; Macdonald, 1999). Most important, teacher attrition impacts students. Student learning suffers from a lack of continuity, unqualified leadership in the classroom, and from the low morale of teachers who may be contemplating leaving the profession (Goldring et al., 2014; Gray et al., 2015; Ingersoll, 2001; Johnson et al., 2005; Kaiser, 2011; Macdonald, 1999; Santoro, 2013).

Teacher identity and job commitment are informed by several key characteristics. In a study of Canadian second and third grade teachers, Clandinin et al. (2015)
inductively developed seven themes that strongly influenced teacher decisions regarding the future of their careers:

- support
- an identity thread of belonging
- tensions around contracts
- the idea that new teachers will do anything
- balancing and composing a life (working hours)
- the struggle to not allow teaching to consume them
- asking themselves “can I keep doing this? Is this teaching?”

Farber (2010) drew upon several in-depth interviews to explore potential causes of teacher attrition. In her study, she gave voice to teachers who felt marginalized in their career due to high-stakes testing, violence in the schools, unsafe schools, unrealistic expectations, overbearing bureaucracy, a lack of respect, low rates of compensation, aggressive parents, and unsupportive administrators. As a part of her study, she developed recommendations for schools, teachers, administrators, and families with school age children to help to stem the exodus, advising reading her study to be more empathetic and understanding of the issues and stressors facing teachers today.

The Schools and Staffing Survey (SASS) conducted by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) is a periodic study that provides large data sets on many variables centered around school staffing, staff satisfaction, background and education, and demographics. The Teacher Follow-up Survey (TFS), conducted the year following each SASS, provides additional information specifically focused on teacher attrition (Cox
et al., 2007). Ingersoll (2001) used this longitudinal data to demonstrate that one reason qualified teachers were choosing to move to other careers was job dissatisfaction.

More than 10% of teachers earning less than $40,000 annually leave during their first-year teaching (Gray et al., 2015; Kaiser, 2011). Of those who leave, over half were more satisfied in their new jobs (Goldring et al., 2014), often finding the manageability of their workload, salary, and general work conditions to be better that they had experienced in teaching.

Emotional exhaustion in teachers has many potential sources (Maslach et al., 1996). The degree of exhaustion that is experienced and that persists can be mediated by strong self-efficacy in a teacher (Fives et al., 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010, 2017b; Zee & Koomen, 2016). However, overwhelming emotional exhaustion can result in reduced self-efficacy and lowered job performance (Fives et al., 2007; Zee & Koomen, 2016). As a consequence of how a teacher experiences and deals with emotional exhaustion and the strength of their professional self-efficacy, a teacher may or may not experience depersonalization and reduced professional accomplishment, two dimensions of burnout (Maslach et al., 2001).

Depersonalization, the tendency of a teacher to become cynical and detached, or to develop a negative attitude toward students or the job, may not happen, if a teacher has a strong sense of self-efficacy (Aloe et al., 2014; Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Likewise, reduced professional accomplishment is not prevalent in strong teachers. Therefore, the input from these two dimensions of burnout to teacher job commitment will be minimal or non-existent in teachers with a strong sense of professional self-efficacy. However, if self-efficacy is not acting as a mediator variable
(Khani & Mirzaee, 2014), then depersonalization and a reduction in job accomplishments can lead to a reduction in teacher commitment and potentially the decision to leave the profession (Zee & Koomen, 2016).
Chapter 3
Methodology

Model of Teacher Self-Efficacy Burnout Cycle

Teacher self-efficacy is a primary predictor of teacher commitment to the teaching profession (Hong, 2010; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011; Zee & Koomen, 2016). Teachers with a strong sense of self-efficacy are better able to deal with the challenges of the career and are more committed to the profession. Positive, successful experiences bolster a teachers’ self-efficacy. Conversely, experiences resulting from negative administrative support, poor relations with colleagues, controversial interactions with parents, students, and community members, poor school conditions and atmosphere, and behavior or classroom management issues do the opposite (Aloe et al., 2014; Khani & Mirzaee, 2014; Ware and Kitsantas, 2011; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

Continuous negative experiences have been shown to lead to teacher burnout. Maslach et al. (2001) described burnout as being experienced in three dimensions; emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment. Of these, emotional exhaustion has been shown to have the most significant impact on teacher job performance (Malinen & Savolainen, 2016; Stoeber & Rennert, 2008)).

Self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion are not exclusive of one another in the teacher experience. The relationship between professional self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion is reciprocal in nature (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). Teachers with low capacity for self-efficacy in the classroom will experience more emotional exhaustion and job dissatisfaction (Zee & Koomen, 2016). Emotional exhaustion can negatively impact teacher self-efficacy in the classroom (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000). Efficacious
teachers are better able to deal with emotional exhaustion resulting from daily job 
stressors, such as social support, relation with colleagues and authority, physical 
environment, lack of proper equipment, student misbehavior and level of fitness 
(Grayson and Alvarez, 2008). Fives et al. (2007) and Khani and Mirzaee (2014) 
described these as contextual factors or variables. The overwhelming impact of daily 
stressors, particularly when coupled with the introduction of new stressors, will 
negatively impact teacher self-efficacy (Brouwers & Tomic, 2000; Fives et al., 2007; 
Khani & Mirzaee, 2014; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011; Zee & Koomen, 2016). In this cycle 
of self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion, low levels of teacher self-efficacy and high 
levels of emotional exhaustion together serve as a strong predictor of teacher intentions to 
leave the profession (Zee and Koomen, 2016).

Measures

Demographic Questionnaire

As a component of the full survey instrument, participants were asked to provide 
information on six demographic questions. They were asked to identify ethnicity, age, 
gender identification, income level, educational background, and tenure as a teacher.

Mixed Methods

As stated previously, teachers in New Mexico are burning out and quitting, 
resulting in teacher shortages throughout the state, particularly in the area around 
Bernalillo County (Perea, 2018). In July 2022, over 1000 vacancies were still unfilled in 
New Mexico (Candelaria, 2022). In a mixed methods analysis of teacher attrition, 
Lindqvist et al. (2014) demonstrated that, during their first five years, teacher 
commitment is a complex, non-linear problem. By introducing qualitative data into a
statistical study, they provided a more nuanced understanding of the experiences of early career teachers. They pointed out that this understanding would not have been obtained using statistical analysis alone. While quantitative analysis provided the overall picture and population trends, qualitative data was required to “…capture ‘close-up pictures…” of the study subjects (Lindqvist et al., 2014). Clandinin et al. (2015) felt that using qualitative data in addition to statistical analysis provided context and richness to the study.

The complexity of the model used in the current study and the questions it was designed to answer required an analytical method that not only assessed the quantitative data obtained using existing, validated instruments, but also qualitatively added teacher voice to that data. Using a mixed-methods, convergent parallel design (see Figure 2) allowed the researcher to pull multiple types of data in to examine a complex problem (DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017).

*Maslach Burnout Inventory – Educator Survey*

The first two variables thought to contribute to attrition and used in the current study are Emotional Exhaustion and Personal Accomplishment, reported hereafter as Self-Efficacy. These variables were measured using the MBI, one of the most frequently used tools to assess burnout among educators (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996; Maslach Burnout Toolkit for Educators, 2018). The MBI was administered along with the Areas of Worklife Survey [AWS], potentially providing insight into how the areas assessed in the AWS may serve as predictors of teacher burnout. Participants taking the MBI were asked to use a 7-point scale, ranging from never to everyday, to indicate how often they felt, or experienced certain feelings or reactions.
The MBI measures the three subscales of Emotional Exhaustion, Personal Accomplishment, and Depersonalization, with the subsections consisting of 9, 8, and 5 questions, respectively. The MBI-ES has proven to have strong reliability and validity. In a study of teacher emotions and burnout among 492 teachers, Chang (2013) reported Cronbach alpha estimates of .87, .84, and .86 for Emotional Exhaustion, Personal Accomplishment, and Depersonalization, respectively. Slightly lower, but still good values, of .85, .79, and .63, respectively, were obtained in a study of 771 Greek Cypriot teachers (Kokkinos, 2006) with a Cronbach alpha for the entire scale of .71. Evidence of the high degree of validity for the MBI-ES comes from a number of studies that uphold the relationship between areas of work experience and the MBI-ES subscales (Leiter & Maslach, 2011).

Emotional Exhaustion and Self-Efficacy were both measured using the MBI-ES. The items from the MBI-ES are nearly identical to the items from the MBI that was initially used by Maslach and Jackson (1981). The word “recipients” is replaced with the word “students” in the Education survey for purposes of clarity. Self-efficacy was measured using the Personal Accomplishment portion of the instrument. In the MBI General Survey, Professional Efficacy the name given to this component of burnout. However, it measures the same concepts as the Personal Accomplishment portion of the MBI-ES. Additionally, when the items from the Personal Accomplishment portion of the MBI-ES are compared to survey items used by Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2007, 2010) and by Tschannen-Moran and Woolfolk Hoy (2001) to measure Teacher Self-Efficacy, the items
Mixed Methods Convergent Parallel Study Design

Note: Dashed circles highlight major points of integration between two data streams.


are similar, indicating that the Personal Accomplishment portion of the MBI-ES provides adequate insight into Teacher Self-Efficacy.

**Areas of Worklife Survey**

The second set of variables studied are those associated with organizational job stressors. The AWS measures six key areas of job-related stressors: community, control, fairness, reward, values, and workload (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, 1999). Using a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, workers responded to statements, situations, and comments on job related topics. A value of 1 represented a strong mismatch between a person and their work environment while a value of 5 represented a strong match. Leiter and Maslach (2011) proposed that the more dissonance seen between an employee and these six domains in their job environment, the greater the likelihood of burnout and attrition.

The six domains chosen by Leiter and Maslach (2011) are based on their findings throughout many years of research (Maslach & Leiter, 1997, 1999; Leiter & Maslach, 1999). To summarize, workload increases have been shown to be related to increasing job burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). The amount of control, or autonomy one has over decisions made in and about their workspace has also been linked to increased burnout (Maslach et al., 1996). Rewards in the workplace can take many forms. While salary is most commonly thought of as a form of reward, recognition for work done is also a key part of a reward system measured in the AWS (Maslach et al., 1996). Support from the work community can bring about a sense of belonging, mitigating an increase in Emotional Exhaustion (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Fairness demonstrates respect for the role one plays in the workplace and can affirm their feelings of professional self-worth.
Conflicts between one’s personal values and those of the organization by whom they are employed have been shown to be related to all three subscales of burnout (Leiter & Harvie, 1997).

Normative sampling for the AWS was conducted in a variety of workplace settings around the world (N=22,714). Participants were from Canada, United States of America, Italy, Spain, Finland, Germany, Mexico, Turkey, and China. The instrument was shown to have good reliability in all six key areas of community, control, fairness, reward, values, and workload with Cronbach’s alpha values of .803, .827, .799, .781, .726, and .666 respectively. Low values were also found for skewness and kurtosis (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). The same study showed that the areas from the AWS correlated well with the three sub-scales from the MBI. Test-retest correlations also were conducted with values from .51 to .62 indicating a strong level of consistency. Evidence of validity was demonstrated by a correlation study of AWS results to complaints contained in the answers to a qualitative hospital study. The topics of complaints were shown to correlate to the AWS subsections (Leiter & Maslach, 2011).

**Job Satisfaction / Motivation to Leave Teaching**

Over the course of several studies, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2009, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2017b, 2017c, 2018) developed and evaluated scales to measure teacher job satisfaction and to measure teacher motivation to leave teaching. In the earlier studies (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009, 2010), the items in the scales were evaluated and modified to provide the best measures of teacher input on the topics of job satisfaction and motivation to leave the profession (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011a, 2011b, 2017b, 2017c, 2018).
Drawing from this work (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009, 2010, 2011a, 2011b, 2017b, 2017c, 2018), two instruments to measure job satisfaction and teacher motivation to leave the profession were developed for this study. Some of the items were modified slightly, as necessary, to use more appropriate English grammar without changing the meaning of the question itself. These items can be found in Appendix A. Each question was answered using a 6-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Totally Disagree) to 6 (Totally Agree). For the job satisfaction portion of the survey, a higher score was associated with higher job satisfaction. In the evaluation of motivation to leave teaching, a higher score was associated with a greater motivation to leave the teaching profession.

In their study, Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011b) reported a Cronbach’s alpha of .91 for their scale of job satisfaction and a Cronbach’s alpha of .92 for the scale of motivation to leave the teaching profession. In the current study, the Cronbach’s alpha for job satisfaction was .90, indicating excellent reliability, while the Cronbach’s alpha for motivation to leave teaching was .87, indicating good reliability. These values, as well as the continued demonstration of validity for the items in the Skaalvik and Skaalvik studies (2011a, 2011b, 2017b, 2017c, 2018), support both, a high degree of reliability and a high degree of validity for the items added to the current study.

**Qualitative Analysis**

A richness that would not be obtained with quantitative analysis alone was obtained by providing the opportunity for teachers to express themselves and describe their experiences during a semi-structured interview that was not limited to specific questions, but rather used open ended questions to guide a discussion (Appendix B). During an interview, teachers explored their own interactions with the daily challenges of
teaching, self-efficacy, burnout, and reflected on their own commitment to the teaching profession. The researcher was also afforded the opportunity to dig deeper with the person he was interviewing to get at truths, thoughts, and ideas that would not have been found in a survey alone. This kind of interview helped to bring qualitative insight and understanding to the experiences that were driving the empirical results (Creamer, 2018; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011; Creswell, 2015; DeCuir-Gunby & Schutz, 2017; Plano Clark & Ivankova, 2016).

In the application of a mixed-methods approach, the researcher used validated and recognized instruments to assess teacher burnout and self-efficacy and gathered intimate feelings and responses about the teaching career from teachers themselves. Triangulation of the data provided a deeper understanding of potential causes of teacher attrition. As stated by Creamer (2018, p. 5), “…qualitative and quantitative data and qualitative and quantitative methods are not incompatible.” A well designed and conducted integrated mixed-methods study has the potential to produce more robust findings than either method alone and may, in fact, help to offset the weaknesses inherent in any method.

**Sampling**

Teacher attrition is a serious problem in school districts throughout the U. S. Teacher attrition is creating significant issues for school districts throughout the state of New Mexico. This study focused on teacher experiences in New Mexico and was drawn from a convenience sample of current teachers in New Mexico. Teachers were recruited by individual emails requesting their participation.

This study recruited teachers of students in grades 9-12 in New Mexico. Regular education teachers who had taught at least one core course (language arts, mathematics,
sciences, social sciences) during each of the previous three teacher evaluation cycles were the focus of participant recruitment. Teachers who had retired or quit within the past three years and who taught core courses were also sought out. Teachers were recruited using snowball sampling, word-of-mouth, emailing school districts and schools, advertising (job boards, Craigslist, etc.), and by social media contacts with associates of the researcher and other education colleagues.

When this recruitment failed to produce the needed number of participants, teachers were recruited by direct contact via email. Email addresses were acquired by searching websites of each high school and/or district in the State of New Mexico for teacher emails and using the email addresses for teachers who met the desired profile. A total of 1,129 email were sent to teachers from 85 different schools. 178 teachers responded by beginning the survey. Of these, only 89 completed the survey and their input is what was used in the current study.

Respondents were 51 females (57%), 37 males (42%), and one who preferred not to say. This is moderately reflective of the national teacher average of 64% female and 36% male as described in 2017-2018 by the U. S. Department of Education, Center for Education Statistics (2019). It was hoped that the demographics of the response sample would reflect the demographics of the state teacher population: Hispanic or Latino (35.6%), White (non-Hispanic) (53.8%), American Indian or Alaskan Native (3.6%), Black or African American (1.4%), Asian (non-Hispanic) (2.0%), Two or more races (2.3%) (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, NTPS, 2017–18). However, with the necessity of using a convenience sample, this ratio was not obtained. Respondents to this study were White/Caucasian (73.0%),
Hispanic/Latino (22.2%), Native American/American Indian (3.4%), Asian/Pacific Islander (1.1%), Black (0%), and Other (2.25%).

The respondents ranged in age from the 18–24-year-old group to those 55+. The respondent’s level of education was varied with 25 having completed a bachelor’s degree, 55 a master’s, five a doctorate, and four with other degrees such as Juris Doctorate. Eighty-four of the respondents were currently contracted as teachers, two as department chairs or supervisors, and three held other positions such as Special Education Instructor, PLC Leader, and Instructional Coach. Frequencies and percentages were calculated for gender, age, ethnicity, education, tenure, and income, and are presented in Table 1.

**Data Collection and Measurements**

Data collection was accomplished in two parts. Quantitative instruments were administered in an online survey format, hosted by Mind Garden (www.mindgarden.com), and consisted of the following instruments: the MBI for Educators (Maslach Burnout Toolkit for Educators, 2018), the Areas of Worklife Survey (Leiter & Maslach, 2011) and questions added by the researcher and drawn from the work of Skaalvik and Skaalvik (2011a, 2011b, 2017b, 2017c, 2018) on teacher job satisfaction and teacher motivation to leave teaching. The online survey was also used to gather participant demographic information.

The MBI and AWS scales each provided data on several different areas, or variables. The MBI was used to evaluate the three primary burnout areas of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and personal accomplishment, as described by Maslach et al. (2001). While data from all three dimensions of burnout was obtained, in the current study,
Table 1

Study Demographics

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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal Income as a Teacher</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20-$30K</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30-$40K</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$40-$50K</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$50-$60K</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>32.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$60-$70K</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$70K+</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Current Employment Position</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>94.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department Chair/Supervisor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
emotional exhaustion was the burnout variable of interest and personal accomplishment was used as a measure of professional self-efficacy. The AWS provided information on the areas of community, control, fairness, reward, values, and workload. Data obtained from these online instruments was available in three forms, raw data, raw scaled data, and group reports tallied by Mind Garden.

The NTSES is a survey developed in and administered initially to Norwegian teachers (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). It is similar in content to the Teachers’ Sense of Efficacy Scale [TSES] that is more commonly used in the U.S. (Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2001). It provides measures of teacher self-efficacy in six areas: instruction, ability to adapt instruction to individual needs, ability to motivate students, maintenance of discipline, cooperation with colleagues and parents, and ability to cope with change. The TSES only provided data on teacher efficacy in the areas of student engagement, instructional strategies, and classroom management. After its initial validation in Norway, the NTSES has been validated in Italy (Avanzi et al., 2013), Serbia (Djigić et al., 2014), Iran and Turkey (Khezerlou, 2013), Poland (Baka, 2017), and New Zealand (Berg & Smith, 2018). For this study, the NTSES was strongly considered.

However, a comparative review of Maslach’s Burnout Toolkit for Educators (2018), the Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual (Maslach, Jackson, & Leiter, 1996), Leiter and Maslach’s (2011) Areas of Work life Survey (AWS), and the NTSES revealed the possibility for self-efficacy measures to be obtained using only the MBI and the AWS. Maslach’s three dimensions of burnout are generally thought of as emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced professional accomplishment. In the MBI, these three dimensions are titled differently in the general survey (MBI-GS) and in the
educator survey (MBI-ES) variations, as explained in the Burnout Inventory Manual (Maslach et al., 1996). In the general survey, they are referred to as exhaustion, cynicism and low professional efficacy. A comparison of two of the instruments found that the eight items from the MBI that were designed to measure reduced professional accomplishment were similar to items on the NTSES. The self-efficacy data needed for this study was obtained from the MBI-ES. Based on this, as well as the need to limit the number of items on the survey to avoid participant fatigue, it was decided to use the NTSES as a reference, but not to include it as one of the survey instruments.

Descriptive statistics were compiled for all variables, as shown below:

- MBI: Emotional Exhaustion, Professional Accomplishment
- AWS: Workload, Control, Reward, Community, Fairness, Values
- Researcher generated items: Job Satisfaction, Motivation to Leave Job

Paralleling administration of the survey portion of the study, six interviews were conducted. High school teachers who had taught at least one core course (language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science) were recruited to be interviewed. Based on responses to open ended questions in the survey portion of the study, attempts were made to recruit two teachers who had quit within the past three years (since July 2017), preferably one from a charter and one from a regular high school, two veteran teachers with over 5 years of experience, one from a regular high school, the other from a charter, and also to interview two teachers with 2-5 years of experience, one from a regular high school and one from a charter school. Unfortunately, those who responded and indicated willingness to participate did not meet these desired criteria. However, they did provide
enlightening input into the topic of teacher burnout and quitting, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Data from both parts of the study were initially analyzed independently. They were then triangulated in a search for points of convergence and divergence. This activity provided a deeper, more thorough understanding of all of the data and how it answered the four research questions.

**Modeling and Analysis**

This study used two models to evaluate the research questions for this study. The first model demonstrates the proposed interactions between teacher self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion. This relationship has been demonstrated in several studies (Betoret, 2006; Fives et al., 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010, 2017b; Zee & Koomen, 2016). The model below was used to answer the first research question. Data for analysis was taken from the MBI for Educators. A simple linear regression analysis was performed to test the model.

The regression analysis was performed using Teacher Self-Efficacy as the independent variable (X) and Emotional Exhaustion as the dependent variable (Y), as shown in the following formula.

$$\hat{Y} = B_0 + B_1X_1 + e$$  

It was initially planned that all quantitative variables would also be tested for between-school hierarchical effects. However, this test was unable to be run due to the low number of respondents, particular the lack of significant numbers from individual schools.
The second model (Figure 3) illustrates the proposed relationships between potential job-related stressors, the levels of emotional exhaustion and teacher self-efficacy, and teacher job satisfaction/intention to leave teaching. The input variables of community, control, fairness, reward, values, and workload were used as the stressors in this analysis. In addition to descriptive statistics, other analyses were performed, as deemed to be necessary, to evaluate the nature of the relationships among the stressor variables, the nature of their relationship to the emotional exhaustion/teacher self-efficacy variable, and, how these influence teacher ideations of leaving the teaching profession.

**Figure 3**

*Main Research Model*

*Note.* Model 2 showing the relationships between job related stressors, the mediating effects of self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion, and the intent to leave teaching.
Answering the second research question required assessment of the components of burnout using the MBI and potential workplace stressors using the AWS as well as data from the Job Satisfaction and Intent to Leave Job portions of the survey that were developed by the researcher. The potential workplace stressors assessed were community, control, fairness, reward, values, and workload. The following general multivariate regression formula was used with this model.

\[ \hat{Y} = B_0 + B_1X_1 + B_2X_2 + B_3X_3 + \ldots + B_nX_n + e \]  

(2)  
(Cohen et al., 2003, p. 117)

To answer the third research question, thematic analysis of the transcripts from six semi-structured interviews was performed. Analyses, including coding, category and sub-category development, and the finding of themes were performed following the guidance of Saldaña (2016). These analyses led to the development of the initial codes in the areas of Community, Control, Fairness, Reward, Values, Workload, Emotional Exhaustion, Self-Efficacy, and Leaving Job. Categories and sub-categories were developed in each of these areas and then compared to similar categories in the other areas in a search for themes that developed across the study areas.

Answering the fourth research question required integration of both qualitative and quantitative findings. This analysis utilized triangulation of the data. Triangulation is a method in which both quantitative data and qualitative data can be gathered about the same construct (Creamer, 2018; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Triangulation allowed the researcher to look at a problem from more than one viewpoint, as informed by the data (Creamer, 2018; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011). Coded data from the interviews, including all sets of themes and categories, were searched for responses indicating job
satisfaction, intentions of staying or quitting the profession, and other items that spoke to job commitment. These were triangulated with the summative data from the MBI, and the AWS. The analysis looked for both points at which the data converged and points of divergence. The final product used a visual analysis of the qualitative results with a cross-reference to the quantitative findings.

Integration

This study used a fully integrated mixed methods model, as described by Creamer (2018). Qualitative and quantitative methods were integrated into the design, data collection, and analysis phases of the study. During the design phase, the potential contributions of both qualitative and quantitative methodologies were considered in the development of research questions to be used in testing the research model. Data collection and analysis were conducted using a QUANT + QUAL parallel convergent design (See Fig. 1). QUANT data was obtained through the online administration of instruments to measure teacher burnout, response to job stressors, job satisfaction, and intent to quit teaching. QUAL data was obtained through interviews conducted in a semi-structured format. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these interviews were conducted online. The themes developed from this data were used in answering the third research question. Qualitative coding and quantitative statistical analysis were conducted independently of one another. Integration occurred when the themes developed from analysis of the qualitative data were compared to trends developed during analysis of the quantitative data. This integration occurred mainly when both qualitative data and analysis as well as quantitative data and analysis were used to answer the fourth research question.
Importance and Relevance of the Study

This study focused on how teachers view the stressors that impact them daily through a lens of self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion and how that view influences their thoughts of leaving or staying in the teaching profession. As shown earlier, teacher attrition is a serious problem around the world, across the Unites States, and in New Mexico. Teachers train for many years yet quit at an alarming rate. It was hoped that this study would add to the corpus of knowledge on not only teacher attrition, but also self-efficacy, burnout, and how teachers respond to stressors. This study has the potential to inform teachers regarding their own practice and to open their eyes to the role these factors play in how they view their continuation in the profession.

The study will also inform administrators at both the building and district levels. This information could be helpful in planning in-service training focused on teacher retention, rather than on raising test scores. In helping administrators to better understand the roles of self-efficacy and burnout in mediating teacher responses to daily stressors, this study can inform better allocation of human resources and counseling for educators. Lastly, this study has the potential to inform the public of the stressors faced by teachers and how teachers respond to those stressors.

Researcher Positionality

The researcher is a white, cis male (he/him) who was born and grew up in southeastern New Mexico. He was raised in a conservative, Christian home which led him to attend a conservative Southern Baptist university for his undergraduate studies. As a veteran teacher with over 25 years of experience, the researcher has seen new teachers whither, fade, and leave during the first few years on the job. He has watched while they
were tasked with the jobs that others did not want and as they pushed themselves toward early burnout, working 60 or more hours a week for one of the lowest paychecks of any professional career. As the district department chairperson for science in secondary schools, he fought for better induction programs for early career teachers. He served as a mentor for early career teachers. He has been there and is, therefore, an insider. However, he is no longer teaching in public schools, having retired in 2015 so that he could return to UNM to complete a Ph.D. Therefore, he is also an outsider. It is from this insider/outsider position that he approached this study.

COVID-19

The data for this study was obtained during the Corona-virus pandemic that began in late 2019-early 2020. Even though this data was obtained during that time and some questions were created to address teacher perceptions and thoughts on some of the changes that resulted in teaching as a result of the pandemic, this is not a study on the effects of the pandemic on teaching. Rather, this study is, as stated, a study of the mediating effects of self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion on teacher responses to worklife areas in consideration of leaving the profession.

As they are fixed instruments, the researcher could not make modifications to the MBI or AWS to specifically capture the impact of the pandemic on the domains they covered. However, it was possible to add to the instruments designed by the researcher. Additional questions regarding the impact of educational changes due to the COVID-19 pandemic were added to the job satisfaction and motivation to leave teaching sections of the survey and to the semi-structured interview questions. These modifications are shown in Appendix A.
Chapter 4
RESULTS

Demographic Variable ANOVA

One-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted to evaluate potential variances in Community, Control, Fairness, Reward, Values, Emotional Exhaustion, Self-Efficacy, and Leaving Job based on Gender, Education, Ethnicity, Income, or Tenure. None were observed, indicating that none of the key predictors or outcomes varied based on gender, education, ethnicity, income, or tenure.

Quantitative Results

This study examined the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and burnout and the role that relationship might play in the impact of potential job stressors on job satisfaction and motivation to leave the teaching profession. Quantitatively, the following questions were analyzed:

1. Does self-efficacy for teachers in New Mexico vary with changes in the level of emotional exhaustion?
2. Does the relationship between teacher self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion mediate the relationship between teachers’ job stressors and motivation to leave the teaching profession?

Descriptive Statistics for Key Variables

Summary descriptive statistics were compiled for the variables of greatest interest: Emotional Exhaustion, Self-Efficacy, Community, Control, Fairness, Reward, Values, Workload, Job Satisfaction, and Leaving Job. For all statistics reported in Table 2, when the absolute value of the reported skewness statistic was greater than 2, the variable was asymmetrical about its mean. If the absolute value of the reported kurtosis
statistic was greater than or equal to 3, the variable's distribution was markedly different than a normal distribution in its tendency to produce outliers (Westfall & Henning, 2013). Both skewness and kurtosis values for all variables fell within acceptable levels.

Table 2

**Summary Statistics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>Min</th>
<th>Max</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
<th>Kurtosis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.46</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.16</td>
<td>0.20</td>
<td>5.60</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>-1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>4.82</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>-0.63</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>2.43</td>
<td>0.89</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>-0.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
<td>-0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>-0.90</td>
<td>0.77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>3.86</td>
<td>0.66</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>2.40</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
<td>-0.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>-0.38</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
<td>0.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>4.92</td>
<td>0.91</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>2.25</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>-0.87</td>
<td>0.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave Job</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.36</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>0.57</td>
<td>-0.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the variables from the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI), using a 1–6-point Likert scale, higher values for Emotional Exhaustion indicated higher levels of burnout, while higher values for Self-Efficacy indicated lower levels of burnout (Maslach et al., 1996). The observations for emotional exhaustion had a mean of 2.79 (SD = 1.46), implying feelings related to burnout several times a month. The mean for self-efficacy was 4.82 (SD = 0.78), indicating feelings related to burnout only a few times a year. However, as described earlier, this also indicated a higher level of self-efficacy, experienced once to several times a week.

The Areas of Worklife Survey (AWS) also used a Likert scale, with values ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). For each of the variables from the AWS, 1 represented a strong mismatch between the person and their work environment while 5 represented a strong match (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). The results
are reported in Table 2. These values indicate that, overall, the teachers in the study sample felt moderately matched to their job in all six areas, though the 2.43 (SD = 0.89) mean for workload does indicate that they feel less matched to their job in this area.

The variables for job satisfaction and the desire to leave the job were based on seven survey items prepared by the author and based on items from similar studies, as discussed previously. The mean for job satisfaction, 4.92 (SD = 0.91), indicated that overall, teachers in the study were mostly satisfied with their teaching job. With a mean of 2.76 (SD = 1.36), Leaving job indicated that a small majority of teachers had no intention of leaving their job, even if they had other opportunities.

**Correlation Analysis**

Both a Pearson and a Spearman correlation analysis were conducted among the Emotional Exhaustion, Self-Efficacy, Community, Control, Fairness, Reward, Values, Workload, Job Satisfaction, and Leave Job variables.

**Pearson Correlation Analysis.** A Pearson correlation requires that the relationship between each pair of variables is linear (Conover & Iman, 1981). This assumption is violated if there is curvature among the points on the scatterplot between any pair of variables. While several significant correlations were found, one or more univariate outliers were detected, which would reduce the power of the Pearson Correlation, which assumed a linear relationship between the variables. Therefore, a Spearman correlation was run, as it only required a monotonic relationship.

**Spearman Correlation Analysis.** A Spearman correlation analysis was conducted among Emotional Exhaustion, Workload, Community, Control, Self-Efficacy, Reward, Values, Fairness, Job Satisfaction, and Leaving Job (See Table 3). Cohen's standard was
used to evaluate the strength of the relationships, where coefficients between .10 and .29 represent a small effect size, coefficients between .30 and .49 represent a moderate effect size, and coefficients above .50 indicate a large effect size (Cohen, 1988).

**Table 3**

*Spearman Correlation Matrix*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Variables</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Emotional Exhaustion</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>-0.54</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Workload</td>
<td>-0.58</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Control</td>
<td>-0.33</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Reward</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.41</td>
<td>0.61</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Community</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td><strong>0.10</strong></td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Values</td>
<td>-0.23</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td><strong>0.53</strong></td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Fairness</td>
<td>-0.34</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>0.30</td>
<td><strong>0.56</strong></td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.48</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Job Satisfaction</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td><strong>0.17</strong></td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td><strong>0.02</strong></td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Leave Job</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
<td><strong>-0.03</strong></td>
<td>-0.19</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>0.05</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td><strong>-0.51</strong></td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**M**

| 2.79 | 4.82 | 2.43 | 3.64 | 3.6 | 3.86 | 3.57 | 3.18 | 4.92 | 2.76 |

**SD**

| 1.46 | 0.78 | 0.89 | 0.72 | 0.77 | 0.66 | 0.76 | 0.74 | 0.91 | 1.36 |

*Note: *p<.05, **p<.01***p<.001

**Assumptions.** A Spearman correlation requires a monotonic relationship, meaning the relationship between each pair of variables does not change direction (Conover & Iman, 1981). This assumption is violated if the points on the scatterplot between any pair of variables appear to shift from a positive to negative or negative to positive relationship.

**Results.** The Spearman Correlation analysis revealed multiple statistically significant correlations, ranging from $p<.001$ to $p<.05$, among the ten variables. Among the MBI results, Emotional Exhaustion and Self-Efficacy had a significant negative correlation with a moderately strong effect ($r_s = -0.54$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [-0.68, -0.37]), meaning that
for every decrease in Self- Efficacy, the teacher would experience an increase in Emotional Exhaustion.

In relating the MBI results to the AWS, emotional exhaustion was found to be significantly negatively correlated to workload ($r_s = -0.58, p < .001, 95\% CI [-0.70, -0.42]$), control ($r_s = -0.33, p < .001, 95\% CI [-0.51, -0.13]$), and values ($r_s = -0.23, p = .038, 95\% CI [-0.42, -0.02]$). The correlation coefficient of -0.58 between workload and emotional exhaustion indicated a large effect size. This correlation indicates that as the reported value for workload increases, emotional exhaustion tends to decrease. Another way of explaining, as teacher congruence with their workload is reduced, they will experience increased levels of emotional exhaustion. Likewise, increases in emotional exhaustion would result in a decrease in teachers’ congruence, or satisfaction, with control, and teachers personal and professional values. Self-efficacy was shown to be significantly positively correlated to control ($r_s = 0.42, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.23, 0.58]$), reward ($r_s = 0.36, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.16, 0.53]$), and community ($r_s = 0.18, p < .001, 95\% CI [-0.03, 0.37]$). The results indicate that as a teacher feels greater control or reward, or experiences a greater sense of community, the teacher will also experience a rise in personal accomplishment, or teacher self-efficacy.

Within the AWS, several significant correlations were also observed. Workload was shown to correlate positively to reward ($r_s = 0.41, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.22, 0.57]$), community ($r_s = 0.10, p = .045, 95\% CI [-0.11, 0.30]$), and fairness ($r_s = 0.30, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.09, 0.48]$). This indicates that an increase in teacher congruence with workload correlates to an increase in reward, community, and fairness. A significant positive correlation was observed between control and values ($r_s = 0.53, p < .001, 95\% CI [0.36,
The correlation coefficient between control and values was 0.53, indicating a large effect size. This correlation indicates that as control increases, congruence with the values variable tends to increase. Both Control ($r_s = 0.27, p = .036, 95\% \text{ CI} [0.06, 0.45]$) and Reward ($r_s = 0.30, p = .017, 95\% \text{ CI} [0.10, 0.48]$) were shown to correlate positively to community with a small effect.

As expected, job satisfaction and motivation to leave the job were significantly negatively correlated ($r_s = -0.51, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI} [-0.65, -0.33]$), meaning that as job satisfaction decreases, the motivation to leave increases. The coefficient of -0.51 indicates that the size of this effect is large.

**Outcome Variable Determination**

Two variables, Job Satisfaction and Leave Job were considered as potential predictors of teacher attrition from the classroom. The Job Satisfaction variable was developed as an indicator of teacher satisfaction with their job and with the teaching profession. Leave Job was developed as a measure of teacher considerations of leaving the teaching profession. Studies have shown that job satisfaction can serve as a predictor of attrition from a workplace (Madigan & Kim, 2021; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011b). It was decided to measure that relationship prior to deciding on Leave Job as the terminal outcome variable. A linear regression analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between the Job Satisfaction and Leave Job variables.

**Assumptions.** Analyses demonstrated that the assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity were met. Since there was only one predictor variable, multicollinearity did not apply, and Variance Inflation Factors were not calculated. An analysis was performed for outliers. One outlier was observed. It was determined that removal of the
outlier was appropriate for this analysis. After removal of the outlier, a regression analysis was performed again.

**Results.** The results of the linear regression model were significant, $F(1, 87) = 48.01, p < .001, R^2 = .35$, indicating that approximately 35.08% of the variance in LeaveJob was explainable by JobSatisfaction. JobSatisfaction significantly predicted LeaveJob, $B = -0.87, t(87) = -6.93, p < .001$. This indicates that on average, a one-unit increase of JobSatisfaction would decrease the value of LeaveJob by 0.87 units. The desired outcome of the second research question addresses teacher intent to leave the teaching profession. It was the opinion of the author that the LeaveJob measure was more appropriate than Job Satisfaction to use as the outcome variable for analysis of the second research question.

**Analysis for Question 1**

The first question asked if self-efficacy for teachers in New Mexico varied with changes in the level of emotional exhaustion. Studies have shown a reciprocal relationship to exist between the burnout components of teacher self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion (Betoret, 2006; Fives et al., 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010, 2017b; Zee & Koomen, 2016). A linear regression analysis was conducted to assess whether teacher self-efficacy, measured as personal accomplishment in the MBI, significantly predicted the level of emotional exhaustion felt by teachers.

**Assumptions.** Analyses demonstrated that the assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity were met. Since there was only one predictor variable, multicollinearity did not apply, and Variance Inflation Factors were not calculated. An analysis was performed for outliers, and one was observed. It was determined that removal of the
outlier was appropriate for this analysis. After removal of the outlier, a regression analysis was performed again.

**Results.** The results of the linear regression model were significant, $F(1, 87) = 28.76, p < .001$, $R^2 = .24$, indicating that approximately 23.98% of the variance in emotional exhaustion is explainable by self-efficacy. Self-efficacy significantly predicted emotional exhaustion, $B = -0.94$, $t(87) = -5.36$, $p < .001$. This indicated that on average, a one-unit increase in self-efficacy would decrease the level of emotional exhaustion by 0.94 units, as shown in equation 3.

$$\text{Emotional Exhaustion} = 7.30 - 0.94*\text{Self-Efficacy} + e \quad (3)$$

This measure indicated that an inverse relationship between self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion was observed in the current study sample, similar to that observed in other studies (Betoret, 2006; Fives et al., 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010, 2017b; Zee & Koomen, 2016). In other words, analysis indicated that as self-efficacy increased, emotional exhaustion decreased. Likewise, as a teacher’s level of self-efficacy decreased, their observed levels of emotional exhaustion increased.

**Analysis for Question 2**

**Introduction.** The second research question asked if the relationship between self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion served to mediate the relationship between job related stressors (Community, Control, Fairness, Reward, Values, Workload) and a teacher’s consideration of leaving the profession. Analysis of mediation was conducted using the methods described by Baron and Kenny (1986). In these tests, the measures from the AWS (community, control, fairness, reward, values, workload) were considered as predictor variables.
A significant relationship between self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion was demonstrated earlier in this study. Based on that relationship, a new variable indicating the level of burnout was created using the emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy variables from the MBI. In this new variable, called Burnout, the values of the self-efficacy variable were subtracted from the emotional exhaustion variable. The values of the resulting scale ranged from -6 to 6 in which -6 is the minimal degree of burnout and +6 is the highest level of Burnout. The observations for Burnout had an average of -2.03 (SD = 1.97, SEM = 0.21, Min = -5.70, Max = 2.20, Skewness = 0.03, Kurtosis = -0.91). This variable was used to test mediation in the model. The Leave Job variable was used as the outcome variable in all mediation models.

Mediation Analysis. Baron and Kenny (1986) presented tests to use when determining the mediating or moderating effects of variables in a study. They also made careful distinctions between the two. Mediation effects are described as those which intervene between a predictor and an outcome variable (Barron & Kenny, 1986). The mediation model tested by Baron and Kenny (1986) used three variables, the independent variables (X), the outcome variable (Y), and the mediator variable (M), as shown in Figure 4.

The test of mediation uses three regression models, as shown in equations 4, 5, and 6.

\[
M = B_0 + B_1X + e \quad (4)
\]

\[
Y = B_0 + B_1X + e \quad (5)
\]

\[
Y = B_0 + B_1X + B_2M + e \quad (6)
\]

Figure 4

Mediation Model.

For mediation to be considered, the independent variable in equation 4 must demonstrate a significant effect on the mediator variable. In equation 5, it must show a significant effect on the dependent variable. In equation 6, the independent variable and the mediator together must show a significant effect on the dependent variable. Finally, if the predicted effects are seen in the results from equations 4, 5, and 6, the effects on the dependent variable in equation 6 must be less than in equation 5. If these conditions are met, then mediation is demonstrated.

**Mediation Analysis Part 1.** A linear regression analysis was conducted to assess whether Reward, Values, Workload, Community, Control, and Fairness together significantly predicted Burnout (see Table 4). The assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity were tested and met as described earlier. Multicollinearity was not observed in this analysis. One minor outlier was observed with a studentized residual of approximately 3.20. It was determined that the effect of this outlier was minimal and could be ignored. Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) were calculated to detect the presence of multicollinearity between predictors. None were observed.
Table 4

Results for Linear Regression with Reward, Values, Workload, Community, Control, and Fairness predicting Burnout

\[
\text{Burnout} = 2.82 + 0.40*\text{Community} - 0.16*\text{Control} - 0.16*\text{Fairness} - 0.52*\text{Reward} - 0.34*\text{Values} - 0.91*\text{Workload}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t value</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>2.8211</td>
<td>1.2201</td>
<td>2.312</td>
<td>0.023*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>0.3973</td>
<td>0.3173</td>
<td>1.252</td>
<td>0.214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>-0.1573</td>
<td>0.3292</td>
<td>-0.478</td>
<td>0.634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>-0.1616</td>
<td>0.3620</td>
<td>-0.446</td>
<td>0.656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>-0.5181</td>
<td>0.3047</td>
<td>-1.701</td>
<td>0.093 .</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>-0.3423</td>
<td>0.3480</td>
<td>-0.984</td>
<td>0.328</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>-0.9097</td>
<td>0.2269</td>
<td>-4.009</td>
<td>&lt; .001 ***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signif. codes: 0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1

Residual standard error: 1.628 on 82 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.3643, Adjusted R-squared: 0.3177
F-statistic: 7.83 on 6 and 82 DF, p-value: 1.12e-06

The results of the linear regression model for part one of the mediation analysis were significant, \( F(6,82) = 7.83, p < .001, R^2 = .32 \), indicating that approximately 31.77% of the variance in Burnout is explainable by Reward, Values, Workload, Community, Control, and Fairness, as shown in equation 7. Workload was negatively associated with Burnout, \( B = -0.91, t(82) = -4.01, p < .001 \), such that adjusting for the other variables in the model, for each decrease of one unit in workload, that is, a deduction of one unit in teacher congruence with their job due to workload, the value for Burnout increased by 0.91 units. This association was statistically significant (\( p < .001 \)). None of the other individual variables in the model was significantly associated with burnout.
**Mediation Analysis part 2.** A linear regression analysis was conducted to assess whether Values, Reward, Community, Workload, Fairness, and Control significantly predicted Leave Job (see Table 5). The assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity were met. An analysis was performed for outliers, and none were observed. Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) were calculated to detect the presence of multicollinearity between predictors. None were observed.

### Table 5

*Results for Linear Regression with Reward, Values, Workload, Community, Control, and Fairness predicting Leave Job*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t value</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>5.5163</td>
<td>0.9608</td>
<td>5.741</td>
<td>&lt; .001***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>0.0970</td>
<td>0.2499</td>
<td>0.388</td>
<td>0.699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>-0.0326</td>
<td>0.2592</td>
<td>-0.126</td>
<td>0.900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>-0.3736</td>
<td>0.2851</td>
<td>-1.311</td>
<td>0.194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>-0.2305</td>
<td>0.2399</td>
<td>-0.961</td>
<td>0.340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>-0.1203</td>
<td>0.2741</td>
<td>-0.439</td>
<td>0.662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>-0.2313</td>
<td>0.1787</td>
<td>-1.294</td>
<td>0.199</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signif. codes: 0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1

Residual standard error: 1.6282 on 82 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.1683, Adjusted R-squared: 0.1074
F-statistic: 2.77 on 6 and 82 DF, p-value: 0.017

The results of the linear regression model were significant, $F(6,82) = 2.77, p = .017, R^2 = .11$, indicating that approximately 10.74% of the variance in LeaveJob is explainable by Values, Reward, Community, Workload, Fairness, and Control. However,
when tested in this model, none of the six AWS variables, individually, was significantly associated with burnout.

**Mediation Analysis part 3.** The final portion of the test for mediation was to regress the outcome variable, LeaveJob, on the predictor variables (community, control, fairness, reward, value, workload) and the potential mediator variable (Burnout). A linear regression analysis was conducted to assess whether Community, Control, Fairness, Reward, Values, Workload, and Burnout significantly predicted Leave Job (see Table 6).

**Table 6**

*Results for Linear Regression with Reward, Values, Workload, Community, Control, Fairness, and Burnout predicting Leave Job*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>SE</th>
<th>t value</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Intercept)</td>
<td>4.4736</td>
<td>0.8810</td>
<td>5.078</td>
<td>&lt; .001 ***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>-0.0498</td>
<td>0.2241</td>
<td>-0.222</td>
<td>0.825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>0.0256</td>
<td>0.23064</td>
<td>0.111</td>
<td>0.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>-0.3138</td>
<td>0.25355</td>
<td>-1.238</td>
<td>0.219</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reward</td>
<td>-0.0390</td>
<td>0.21688</td>
<td>-0.180</td>
<td>0.858</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>0.0063</td>
<td>0.24493</td>
<td>0.026</td>
<td>0.980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>0.1050</td>
<td>0.17363</td>
<td>0.604</td>
<td>0.547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnout</td>
<td>0.3696</td>
<td>0.07726</td>
<td>4.784</td>
<td>&lt; .001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signif. codes: 0 ‘***’ 0.001 ‘**’ 0.01 ‘*’ 0.05 ‘.’ 0.1 ‘ ’ 1

Residual standard error: 1.139 on 81 degrees of freedom
Multiple R-squared: 0.3515, Adjusted R-squared: 0.2955
F-statistic: 6.273 on 7 and 81 DF, p-value: 6.884e-06

The assumptions of normality and homoscedasticity were met. An analysis was performed for outliers, and none were observed. Variance Inflation Factors (VIFs) were
calculated to detect the presence of multicollinearity between predictors. None were observed.

The results of the linear regression model were significant, \( F(7, 81) = 7.83, p < .001 \), \( R^2 = .30 \), indicating that approximately 29.55% of the variance in LeaveJob is explainable by Reward, Values, Workload, Community, Control, Fairness, and Burnout. Burnout was positively associated with Leave Job, \( B = 0.37, t(82) = 4.784, p < .001 \), such that adjusting for the other variables in the model, for each increase of one unit in Burnout, the value for Leave Job increased by 0.37 units, and this association was statistically significant \((p<.001)\). None of the other variables in the model was significantly associated with Leave Job.

**Mediation Analysis Summary.** As shown in Table 4, the areas from the AWS were shown to have a significant effect on the proposed mediator variable. The AWS variables were also demonstrated to have a significant effect on the outcome variable, Leave Job, as shown in Table 5. In the final portion of the mediation analysis, shown in Table 6, it was demonstrated that the effects on the outcome variable, Leave Job, of the model given in equation 6 were less that those demonstrated in equation 5. This suggests that the relationship between emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy does serve as a mediator between the AWS job stressors and the Leave Job outcome variable.

**Summary of Quantitative Findings**

An ANOVA and regression analysis were run on emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy to establish the nature of the relationship between the two. An inverse relationship was indicated by the data, matching the relationship trend seen in other studies (Betoret, 2006; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010). A new study variable, Burnout,
was developed representing the relationship between emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy. Several regression analyses were then conducted, following the method of Baron & Kenny (1986), to assess the role of the Burnout variable as a mediator between the six areas of worklife from the AWS, also referred to as stressors, and teacher ideations and intentions of leaving. The analysis indicated that the Burnout relationship does act as a mediator.

**Qualitative Results**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with six high school teachers from throughout New Mexico to better understand their perspectives on the six potential job-related stressors taken from the AWS, as well as looking at emotional exhaustion, self-efficacy, and thoughts on changing careers. The interviews lasted from 60 to 75 minutes each and were conducted late in the spring of 2021. The interviews were conducted online and recorded using ZOOM video communication software. A copy of the guiding questions for the semi-structured interviews can be found in Appendix B. The interviews were transcribed using the Otter.ai (version 2.12) online service and verified by rereading and editing the transcripts while listening to the interviews. Coding was done using MAXQDA (version 2022) software, following the guidance of Saldaña (2016), Amanfi (2019), and Rädiker & Kuckartz (2020). Analysis was conducted seeking the categories and themes that emerged within the areas of the AWS (community, control, fairness, reward, values, workload), MBI (self-efficacy, emotional exhaustion), and intention of leaving teaching, as informed by the third research question:
How do teacher levels of self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion inform their experiences with job related stressors and potential intentions of leaving the teaching profession?

An open coding procedure was used in which codes in each area were developed and modified in MAXQDA using the transcriptions of the interviews.

During first cycle coding, each transcript was read and reread with segments coded and assigned to the appropriate area of interest defined by the research question. In the second cycle of coding, the codes from each of the areas of interest were combined into major categories and subcategories with particular attention paid to similar categories that began to emerge between the areas. These categories and subcategories and the codes within them were evaluated again and the following themes emerged in the areas of Self-Efficacy, Emotional Exhaustion, and Teacher Attrition:

- Administrators play a major role in setting the tone for educational workplaces.
- Workload is a major cause of Emotional Exhaustion in teachers.

The findings in each of the areas of the AWS (community, control, fairness, reward, values, workload), MBI (self-efficacy, emotional exhaustion), and attrition are described below.

**Participant Demographics and Sample Description**

The participants in the interviews included six teachers from high schools around the state of New Mexico. They were recruited from among those who completed the study survey and indicated that they would be interested in participating in the interview portion of the study. The participants had already provided demographic information
regarding gender, ethnicity, and age as well as about their education, teaching experience, and current position during the survey portion of the study. As shown in Table 7, four of the six respondents identified as female, and all were in the age range of 25-34 years. Half of the respondents identified themselves as white/Caucasian, two as Native American, and one as Hispanic/Latina. Four had completed a bachelor’s degree and two had earned a master’s degree. The most experienced teacher had been in the classroom between six and ten years, two had four to five years of experience and half of the respondents were in their second or third year in the classroom.

Table 7

Demographic Information for Interview Participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age (yrs.)</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Highest Education</th>
<th>Years Teaching</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>4-5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>Master’s</td>
<td>6-10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>25 - 34</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latina</td>
<td>Bachelor’s</td>
<td>2-3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Description of Findings by Study Area

Analysis of the six interview transcripts was conducted to seek out the themes that emerged within and between the areas of the AWS (community, control, fairness, reward, values, workload), the MBI (self-efficacy, emotional exhaustion), and attrition. Using MAXQDA, codes were developed within each of these nine areas and were then cross checked to each of the other areas in looking for the categories that would lead to the
primary themes that permeated the full interview portion of the study. The findings from each area are described below and summarized at the end of the section.

Community

The teacher community described the primary social interactions within the work community, including closeness, conflict, support, and the ability of the community to work as a team (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Workers lacking administrative support from within their professional community have been shown to experience higher levels of burnout while support from colleagues is more closely related to efficacy (Leiter & Maslach, 1998).

Figure 5

Word Map of Most Common Words Used to Describe Community

The word cloud shown in Figure 5 represents the most common words and word groups used by the participating teachers when describing the area of community. The five most frequently observed were kids/students, teacher/teachers, teaching/work/job,
class/classroom, and parents. Words with the same or very similar meanings were grouped together in the word clouds under a single representative word. In analysis of the area of community, the four categories that emerged were those of students, colleagues, and the school community, administrative and governance, and parents and the local community.

**Category 1: Students.** The largest category under community is that of students. Five sub-categories emerged within this category: instructional interactions with teachers, care from teachers, challenges/opportunities, interventions by teachers/administrators, and dealings with administrators. Teachers described how they would provide safe spaces in their classroom for students who did not feel safe in commons areas during lunch, how they would interact in a joking, yet firm, manner with students who were in violation of such things as masking rules or rules regarding hats indoors, or how they would reach out to students via email if they knew that a student was struggling.

As a category, students emerged as the primary community with which teachers engage on a daily basis in their career. Within this overall category, two specific areas of interaction between teachers and students emerged that contribute to teacher self-efficacy or emotional exhaustion. The two interaction subcategories that are discussed here are (a) instructional interactions between students and teachers, and (b) interventions and/or care provided for students by teachers.

**Subcategory 1.1. Instructional interactions between students and teachers.** This subcategory emerged when exploring important components of the instructional relationship between teachers and students in a learning community. Three areas of common thought regarding helping students to be successful emerged from the
interviews with teachers. Teachers should try to know their students, should respect them and see them as individuals, and should be genuine with them because, after all, teachers are human as well.

So, I think that one of the things that is very important to me is to really know the stories of your kids, you've got to talk to them, you've got to get to know them on a personal level, you've got to understand what they're going through, right? If your student's homeless, you have to know that. If your student has alcoholic parents, you have to know that. If your student has attempted to kill themselves, you have to know that, right? So as you get to know more of these stories, and you come in touch with them, and you say, "Hey, how you doing today?" You know, you and you have that personal connection, you talk with them, it's so important, and you let them know that you're invested in them.

Students who feel valued and respected tend to try harder in classes.

So, I think just kind of, you know, trying to see them more as individuals and not just, you know, students, I think they kind of understand that. And I think maybe that's what gets them to try hard in my class.

**Subcategory 1.2. Interventions and/or care provided by teachers for students.** As teachers were describing areas of interaction that they had with students, a subcategory emerged where teachers described interactions in which they provided care or an interaction for students that might be described as going above and beyond the contractual obligations of a teacher.
Two particular stories emerged as representative of the type of stressful extra distance teachers will go for students. One teacher described reaching out to parents of a student who had been a high performer but had begun to fall behind.

…this just happened today, I had a student, very smart kid, he's been like, his sleep schedule hasn't been great. So, I know, his home life has been some really rough patches due to the fact that his parents did lose their jobs. Um, at some point, [broke up] during the pandemic, They're, they're just trying to live paycheck to paycheck by now. And so, today before right before this, actually, during tutoring, he asked me to talk to him separately without anyone there. So I just went ahead and made a separate call. We talked a bit. His, his mom talked to me, explained the whole situation. And she's apologizing profusely, she's like, "I'm so sorry about the internet, but we're not gonna have internet because we'd decided to pay the house bill instead" and they're like, I told her, "I completely understand, because growing up, my parents were like that, all the time.” My dad was a car salesman, my mom worked in retail. And so we were living paycheck to paycheck basically, pretty much until I moved out, which was like five or six years ago. Um, that's when they finally started getting stuff together. But I totally understand like, I told her," I understand that, um, things happen, my family lived paycheck to paycheck pretty much my entire life. So, if you can't get the assignment done, then I'm going to compensate it". It's a so what I did was I emailed his parents his worksheet, I just printed his work as a PDF and sent it to his parents. So his dad can print it when he goes to work. So, I find ways to compensate for things like that, and I totally get it.
Another teacher was faced with what may be the most traumatic crisis most teachers will face, the suicide of a student.

I make it a very, very big point that I talk to the kids about talking to somebody, not necessarily to me if they don't want to, but I make it very clear that if they need a space, if they want me to not talk to them, they could just sit in my space, I don't care. But to come find somebody. And so every year that I have taught, I've actually had a student commit suicide. I have not had a year where I have not had one, which is kind of horrifying to think about. And so it's it's interesting, because it's like, I've always really struggled with it. So like this last year, the student that I lost, I lost him when we went into COVID. And so like he, he used to come sit. He didn't want to be in my room because I had all those rowdy kids in there. But he wanted to be near my room. So he used to sit like right outside my door, like on the floor in the hall and eat his lunch. And so probably every week, maybe two weeks, I'd take my lunch and I'd actually sit on the floor next to him in the hall. I just eat lunch next to him. We didn't have to talk I would just, sorry about that [background bells]. I would just eat with him. Be near him. And so when COVID hit, he really did not deal well with being at home. And then in April, that's when his parents notified me of his passing. And that, that was probably one of the hardest ones I've had so far. It messed me up pretty good to be honest.

Category 2: Colleagues and the school community. The professional community within which teachers work emerged strongly as a second community of importance to the teachers interviewed. Within this overall category, three sub-categories of interaction between teachers and their community of professional colleagues emerged that
contributed to teacher self-efficacy or emotional exhaustion. The three sub-categories that are discussed here are (a) teacher leadership and professional teams, (b) colleagues, and (c) mentoring.

**Subcategory 2.1. Teacher leadership and professional teams.** In discussing their duties and the roles they filled professionally in the school community, the common subcategory that emerged was collaboration. The areas most frequently mentioned were collaboration in curriculum and lesson development and collaboration in working with students. The importance of teamwork in teaching came through clearly from most of the participants, as did consulting with colleagues when a student presents problems with which a teacher is struggling. In the interviews, the importance of collaboration with colleagues was emphasized several times.

I have a co-worker, her name is [omitted], and she's, she was a first-year teacher last year. But she's definitely one of those teachers that just has her shit together, you know what I'm talking about like, one of those, like teachers who strive to be kind of intimidating. But she, uh, she and I will work together like, with this new schedule stuff's like so overwhelming in terms of planning time, that we definitely split the load. So like, I'll start making presentations, we'll cut and paste stuff, and then I'll polish it. And then the next time she'll make a review, and we share it. So she and I, we meld pretty well with our resource development

The stress that can result when a member of a team does not pull their load emerged as well.

…one guy is retiring at the end of April. And he's not participating in his job duties. So like, as the PLC lead, what I did to try to make our jobs easier was I
split up the workload, since we all have to teach the same material at the same
time, we have these things called week at a glance, that's kind of like openly
agenda… so this semester, he's had three weeks at a glance he's supposed to have
done and he hasn't done two of them. And then I had to do like half of his third
one, for example. We're getting ready to plan for finals. And so what I tend to do
is I asked people to look at the test and write down what questions they like. And
then I look at, I compare what everybody liked, so that they all have their input.
And we talk about like, finalizing it, like "we all liked number seven, so we
should put that on the test", you know. And so he wrote in for all of our planning
there, ‘retired’, even though he's still gonna be here, and we're discussing it, but
he doesn't want to give any input or do anything with it. And so I have a very hard
time respecting that. But that's a work ethic thing. Like I think that's just a lazy
way to go about it

**Subcategory 2.2. Collaboration.** Beyond the area of teaming and curriculum
development, collegiality also extends to sharing new information from conferences and
workshops, as well as working in the same proximity daily. Participants described
important interactions that they had with colleagues in sharing new information, in
working together to deal with a student showing behavior problems, and in supporting
one another.

The opportunity to engage in workshops, conferences, and other professional
development opportunities can enhance a teacher’s self-efficacy. Sharing new
information with colleagues can be a boost to an entire department. One participant
observed that:
We basically communicated everything that we learned from that professional development, trained our teachers and then we started working on a cross curricular project-based learning plan for like our school and we were working on it it's just you know we have some teachers that are involved, we have some teachers that are not very involved

Another participant described the importance of being in a place where colleagues acknowledge to each other that they know and understand the exhausting struggles each face.

For colleagues, I, I love our staff. I love our faculty, I talk with them all the time, both personally as well as professionally throughout the day. We do have the majority of our staff is from Silver City, which is about 40 minutes away from us. So most of them commute down. And so in terms of like personal life, we don't really see them outside of school, but you know, it's kind of a nicety with virtual learning. We're all sick of our computers by the end of the day. So we'll all go out in the hall and just chit chat with one another for an hour and talk about our days and everybody's really giving and pretty laid back. Nobody is really judgmental about how somebody else does their job. Everybody's very experienced here. So we all trust each other that we're doing our jobs in the classroom. Most of the collaboration that we do is, in terms of, ‘Hey, I found this cool app that you could use,’ ‘Hey, did you know you could do this on Google meet?’ Or, ‘hey, I had a problem with this, how could you fix it?’ And the other collaboration is just about students and how to reach students. So you know, where if there's a student who just really doesn't get along with me, but gets along great with another staff
member? I'm like, ‘Okay, well, what's your approach? And so we share ideas that way.

**Subcategory 2.3. Mentorship.** In speaking about professional relationships in the school community, several of the participants mentioned the importance of a mentor in helping them as they began their teaching career. Some also mentioned how they had been called on to mentor other teachers. The importance of mentorship as a component in building self-efficacy was apparent when reviewing the interview transcripts. Two key concepts that emerged regarding mentorship were that mentorship should be a learning and growth experience for both parties and that mentorship can be formal or informal.

Teacher preparation programs provide guidance in many aspects of the teaching career. However, teachers indicate that most of what they use in their teaching practice, they learned on the job from other teachers, from experience, or from a mentor. One described this experience, saying “I had to really learn from a colleague of mine how to teach in a better way and try, try to understand where the students are at, at their level”

Those who mentor others often find that they also take new knowledge and growth away from the mentoring experience.

And my head of the math department there, he was actually my mentor teacher, when I student taught. So he used all of my materials from when I student taught, and then he took all of my materials from when I was teaching there. And, you know, my he, at that time, he thought that my work was amazing, you know, and he used it, he still uses it”
Collaboration and helping other teachers, an informal form of mentorship, is an important part of growth as a teacher. And, again, it provides growth opportunities for both people.

Because I’m new, I haven’t built those relationships yet. But I did have one of my colleagues this week, she’s gonna be out of town. She texted and said, “Hey, save my bacon. What can I do with my students when my sub this week” and I sent her a handful of things. So I have personally come out of my shell a little more and maybe like, refocused my relationships with my coworkers and tried to see the positive side of it, rather than the negative. And I’ve tried to like, give a lot of what I’m doing. And that’s really helped with my relationships with them is giving, instead of being secluded

**Category 3. Administration/governance.** In the discussions of community, the category of administration, or governance, of the school or the district was also noteworthy. This category described the relationship of administrators, particularly principals, to the staff, teachers in particular, in the school community. It also encompassed relationships of administrators to students within the school community, including how administrators are perceived by teachers within the school community.

**Subcategory 3.1. Administrator relationship to staff in the school community.**

Within this sub-category, the idea that the administrator is largely responsible for setting the mood in the areas for which they are responsible emerged strongly. The participant comments demonstrated how, in their experience, interactions with administrators in the school community have helped to build confidence and self-efficacy or created adversarial conditions leading to emotional exhaustion.
My current administration, she's, she's amazing. She's been a principal, I think, for like, 25 years. And honestly, she started up this year, brand new, and I just, I adore her, she's amazing. You know, she always is there to listen. And, you know, if I need to gripe or something, she, she doesn't judge or anything, you know, very supportive lady, and she, she always has something to say that kind of lifts you up.

A frequent complaint was that, even when in the room, administrators failed to see, or to understand what was happening because they didn’t truly understand the dynamics of the class.

My previous administrator, and I had some conflicting views on things, but we were able to, were able to come to some agreements, like, for example, um, there was a one day is a really messy day, this is like one of my worst work days, but my students are reviewing for the... for a test. And so she just walks in, and super, like super quietly, and everyone else is being super loud, to where I don't hear her walk in, and I'm already helping another student, and I'm sitting down in my chair, helping and helping down students. And when, after, everything's said and done after she roams the classroom for a bit and makes little notes I meet with, I scheduled to meet with her that afternoon. And so we were just going back and forth about what she saw versus what I saw. She said that she had seen kids goofing around. I said, I saw some good math talk between some tables. Some tables, I know, are ahead, which is why they're, which is why they are, they think they can mess around or as some, like two or three of them that had all their work turned in, completely done. So, they had nothing to do. And so she's calling me
out on these little things. And I'm trying to explain her. So that would turn into like a whole hour conversation that was supposed to be like two minutes.

**Subcategory 3.2. Administrators out of touch with the school community.** Several teachers expressed that they felt administrators were out of touch with what went on in the areas over which the administrators had responsibility. They sometimes did not know the teachers who taught for them. Teachers also expressed that they were sometimes not comfortable communicating directly with some administrators.

It's interesting at those bigger schools, how they don't talk to you. Of course, maybe I don't want the head principal to talk to me. And then I had principal talked to me at [omitted], it was nothing but yelling at me.

One expressed difficulty approaching an administrator who they found to be intimidating. As a result, they did not approach that administrator and were quiet when around him.

…the school culture that I came into is very, what is it? ‘rah, rah, rah rah, like, Sis, boom, bah,’ they are always shouting each other out and sending emails of inspiration. And I came into it thinking it was so insincere, I was like, ‘Oh, my gosh, people, can just mean what we say.’

**Control**

Teachers expressed a need to feel they had control over key areas of their career. They felt it was important that they have professional autonomy. They wanted to be able to make decisions that affected their work and career and wanted to have the resources they needed to do so (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Studies have shown that teachers lacking this kind of control experience higher levels of emotional exhaustion (Maslach, Jackson, et al., 1996). Workers who have a greater opportunity to actively participate in
organizational decision making and who have more autonomy have been shown to have greater levels of professional efficacy (Lee & Ashforth, 1993; Leiter, 1992).

The word cloud shown in Figure 6 represents the most common words used by participating teachers in describing the area of control. The five most frequently observed were teaching/work/job, kids, school, teacher, curriculum. In the analysis of control, six categories emerged: teaching practice, administration and governance, students, teacher self, colleagues and the school community, and community and parents.

**Figure 6**

*Word Map of Most Common Words Used to Describe Control*

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**Category 1. Teaching practice.** Three subcategories emerged from the interviews in the category of teaching practice: teacher control of curriculum and lesson development, the use of scripted curriculum, and the control of instruction during the COVID pandemic. Discussion frequently focused on what teachers did, why they did it, how they did it, and obstacles they faced in doing their job. Participants frequently expressed how they were able to meet the unique needs of students and of student
families when they were able to make modifications to the curriculum and to the lesson design. Several expressed concerns over being required to use scripted curricula.

**Subcategory 1.1. Teacher control of curriculum and lesson development.**

Participants strongly expressed the idea that teachers knew their students best and, therefore, were best suited to develop the curriculum and methods that were most engaging and best met the needs of their students.

…when it comes to curriculum development, I know there isn't like a perfect lesson plan or anything. But for me to be comfortable with how I'm teaching, and what I'm teaching and how engaging it is, making sure it's PBL enough. Making sure it's culturally relevant enough is, you know, because all of those go into our mission statement. And I believe in the mission statement, it's just a matter of the knowledge and experience that I have, where I'm at now

Teachers pointed out that even if they weren't following a scripted lesson plan, they were following standards as they prepared lessons, they thought their students needed.

…I know that I'm a good teacher, I know that I'm getting the kids the experience they need. It might not be exactly what next gen science standards is asking me to do. But I'm doing what I'm doing successfully. And I think my kids are being successful that way as well. And I'm not it's not like I'm ignoring the standards, and we still do you know, inquiry-based learning and "check this out. Why do you think this is happening? Let's do a unit about it." But, you know, it's not perfectly aligned, per se, just because I've developed my own curriculum. And I hate the rigidity of that, too. I gotta have some freedom to be myself and focus on some things that I find interesting.
One teacher expressed a need to be able to eliminate lessons, or parts of lessons, to modify or change units based on student need. They said, “But there are definitely points in time where I'll say, I am throwing this lesson out, I'm throwing this unit out, I'm picking this other unit, just because it’s what students need.”

**Subcategory 1.2. The Use of Scripted Curriculum.** Another sub-category that was brought up by most of the interview participants was that of using “canned” or “scripted” lessons in the classroom. They expressed concerns that being required to use such materials kept them from being as effective as they were when they designed their own lessons. They often reported concerns that they were not meeting the needs of the students when using scripted materials. They observed that, as the teacher in the classroom every day, they were most qualified to prepare lessons that best met student needs.

I'm big on implementing games in my classroom. But with our new textbook, [school district] doesn't want us to develop materials that deviate away from the textbook. So I can only use their kind of canned curriculum, which usually I'm chomping at the bit pretty hard about that, because I'm very much about customizing your lessons.

One teacher described a situation in which she wished to conduct a study to compare the results of lessons she planned with scripted lessons mandated by the district.

And so my focus with my master's was that I didn't want to, like I wanted to do a study based off of prescribed curriculum. And so they used Eureka, which is absolutely trash, just so you know that curriculum is garbage. So I was asking if, for one, for one of my classes, could I use non prescribed curriculum? Could I go
off the ropes a little bit and develop my own stuff? I'd still teach the same lessons, but not the same examples. And they said no.

Another teacher pointed out that even when you follow scripted curriculum, sometimes you will find areas of weakness that a responsible teacher will cover in more depth. Unfortunately, that would have consequences in the required pacing for the class.

So one of the biggest things that I have noticed is you kind of play this weird dichotomy where if you have like a prepared curriculum that you are trying to keep up with pacing and making sure that students are caught up with all those different information, but also you are hit with very glaring issues, where students are absolutely way behind and I mean, like way behind and so, they oftentimes you have to adjust pacing, and you have to play with changing curriculum and understanding what the grade level standard is.

Subcategory 1.3. Control of instruction during COVID pandemic. Another important part of this Subcategory that was expressed was the need to adjust curriculum to meet the changing needs of delivering instruction online due to COVID. It was noted that even when scripted curriculum had been mandated, it was necessary to make adjustments when instruction did not occur in the classroom.

I am adjusting the curriculum a little bit and you know, shortening it here and there, omitting some things, spending a little more time on certain things that are more difficult to teach virtually. But other than that content is generally about the same.
One teacher described changes she made in testing while her classes were taught online. She described how observations of student testing during that time would result in changes to how she tests students once face-to-face testing resumes.

Testing, like I said, was different; open book and open note. However, when they come back to the classroom, I think I'm going to remain having an open book policy. Obviously, they have to have their book and they have to bring it to class. That's the stipulation. They can use their book if they have their own.

Participants also expressed that due to the unique demands of teaching during the early phases of the COVID pandemic, they would modify what they were now doing online with their classes. These modifications were seen as necessary to meet unique student that were arising from the isolation of COVID lockdowns. One pointed out that, “Last year, when we were first going into like quarantine, we were allowed to kind of not teach standards, the state standards. And our schoolwork more focused on social emotional learning”

Another described allowing students to use some of the instructional time to talk with other students through the chat feature. She felt this was acceptable, given the isolation many students were feeling during online instruction because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Some students that aren't active vocally through like the microphone they talk through the chat box and they're still interacting with the students with their other classmates and I kind of just allow them some of that time to interact with each other get to know one another and also that kind of just hopefully is a little bit more relaxing for them instead of just like constantly drilling them academically
same thing for my ninth grade class I really do try to give them some time where they can interact with each other because I know that they're a close group and I do try to relate to the topics that they talk about so that's kind of like one of the things that I do.”

**Category 2. Administration and Governance.** Two sub-categories emerged in which teachers expressed concern over control in dealing with administration and governance. Teachers felt that they had little or no control in dealings with administrators. They felt that they were not respected and that their voices were rarely heard. Teachers also expressed concerns regarding equity and voice in teaching assignments.

*Subcategory 2.1 Dealings with administration.* Teachers expressed frustration with the administrators who did not value the efforts and skills of their teachers, or who did not show trust in their teachers, something that would reduce teacher self-confidence, resulting in feelings of exhaustion. They gave examples of times they felt that they had little or no control in dealing with administrators or with decisions that impacted their instructional practice and their growth as an education professional.

I feel like I’m kind of [pause] kind of used, I guess, taken a little more advantage of. Yeah, but it just feels like my, my time isn’t very considered isn’t really considered. And when I do share my ideas, it just feels like it’s not heard. One described what he felt was a “political” decision by a principal to cut a tutoring program the teacher offered students.

Now that we changed to teaching seven periods all day, five days a week, I don't have any tutoring available for kids. I might start a lunch session. But I've actually
been specifically told not to offer tutoring after school and for the online kids. Which was a very political decision by our main principal, which is why I lost some respect for him.

They also expressed that positive, supportive administrators tend to have the opposite effect, boosting self-confidence.

We had an interim principal here at the school last year, who just put so much self-confidence within me. He really believed in me and another colleague of mine, and really kind of just allowed us to take charge and do whatever we wanted to do with the school because he knew that we had good intentions for the students and their families.

Teachers frequently expressed the importance of having autonomy that administrators grant them in their classroom, as was expressed here.

Our principal right now, this is his second year make no, this is his third year. And I love him. I, he is great. He is super supportive. He's really energetic. So he always volunteers to do things for us. He supports the teachers, probably a little more than he should. That's never a thing to complain about. And, you know, he gives us a lot of freedom in the classroom as well, because he knows that we're experienced, he knows that we're doing good things. So, I really appreciate that about him.

One teacher pointed out that administrators who visit her room know that she is doing a good job with students while administrators who mistrust her rarely, if ever, visit her class.
I know I'm a good teacher, my principal knows I'm a good teacher, I'm doing what I'm supposed to do. And so, I think there's a lot of trust there to let me do what I need to do in the classroom. And I think administrators in general have been really good about that, really good about trusting what I do. And the administrators that haven't been trusting of what I do just are absent in the classroom. They never even show up.

Teachers who had been at more than one school sometimes described how they experienced differences in administrative styles between schools.

I'm like, Oh, my God. Like, my first year at [omitted], I had a different admin, but she's still pretty supportive. But you know, she'd be like, "Hey, can you come to my office so we can talk?" And I'd be like, freaking out, like, "what did I do wrong", you know, and all she'd want to do is say, like, Hey, I walked by your classroom and saw how great you were doing or something like that. And it, it took me a long time to be like, ‘Oh, I can approach your office?’

Issues surrounding the return to the classroom after remote learning due to COVID were also expressed. Some teachers expressed that they did not feel their lives were valued by administrators who were making the decision to return teachers and students to the classroom.

60% of parents said they wanted their kids to go back to the classroom. And instead of instead of caring that the teachers are all afraid to go back to work, the next week, they said, ‘Hey, we're all going back.’ Of course, that was right after we also had a vaccination rally scheduled and they canceled the vaccination rally,
like right out from under us within 24 hours… I was outraged, people, people were outraged.

**Subcategory 2.2 Teaching/job assignments.** Teachers felt that they had little input into how classes were scheduled or what they were assigned to teach within their area of certification or licensure. It was pointed out that some classes are better offered at certain times of the day or within a certain portion of a block schedule, but this is not typically what happens. Often, class scheduling is done in a way that facilitates afternoon athletic activities.

So, in terms of scheduling, I have no control. Um, which is extremely frustrating, because science really should be thought of first on the schedule. Besides like college classes that needs to be set up at a certain time. But science should really should be up there on the list because they need to keep in mind we need time to prep a lab. And if you're switching me physical science, biology, physical science, biology, that is a really, really crappy schedule. Because I'm gonna prep for one lab, take it down prep for another lab, take it down, you know. So, and I've had years like that, and so I've complained so many times to her, the person who does the scheduling, and bless her heart, she does it every year, but she's never happy doing it and I'm never happy how she does it.

Teachers expressed that their voices were not heard and that they felt they had little say in class scheduling or sizes. If they did attempt to provide input, they were ignored, “I get what I get and I just got to deal with it. Um, I can complain but it generally doesn't do anything.” Often, they would return to school to begin a new year, finding that not only were their assigned classes not what they expected, but that they had been given
unexpected courses or groups for which they could have planned over the summer. However, now they only had a few days to prepare, “I don't get to choose what kind of class I teach or what topic I teach. Like I said they told me three days before I had students sitting in my class that I'd teach special ed.”

In addition to expressing frustration at having limited input to their teaching assignments, they also pointed out that being politely asked if you would like to teach a particular course was sometimes a way of telling you that you would teach that course regardless.

Well, most of the time, you don't get to choose your teaching assignment. So you're told you're going to teach this, or they'll ask you which is really nice when you get asked if you'd like to teach this, that or the other…

It was also noteworthy that teachers who demonstrated proficiency or an ability to deal with problematic topics or groups of students will often find themselves assigned the most difficult classes without additional compensation or time to plan.

I don't think that the counselors are fair, because the counselors determine where you get students. And so, you know, from from my history last year, a lot of the counselors are like they say, "Oh, you do such a good job ****", and then they'll send me the difficult cases. Which sucks.

However, in smaller schools or districts, it is not uncommon for senior teachers to be given the opportunity to provide input into teaching assignments and scheduling of classes. Teachers with seniority from smaller districts or schools often did find that they could have an impact on the course of instruction in the school. “I'm actually the head teacher at our school so I do have a pretty big influence on the other teachers.” They
expressed that sometimes they could have an impact on student scheduling, “I have been in charge of, like, our scheduling our students’ schedules.” Those in charter schools were able to have a greater influence on curriculum and planning that their colleagues in regular public school systems. “Even though I work at a charter school, you know, we're able to do so, so many more things than a public school.”

**Category 3. Control in dealing with students.** Teachers frequently expressed how important it was to them to be able to determine how they dealt with students and how these dealings enabled them to better meet the needs of students. Sub-categories ranged from control of how they would teach to how they would spend time with students outside of the traditional classroom time. Teachers also frequently mentioned that it was hard to have the control that they needed during remote learning to ensure that students were engaged and learning as they should.

**Subcategory 3.1. Control and students in the classroom.** A key part of having control in the classroom was, ironically, to empower students. Several times, teachers mentioned the importance of recognizing student agency. It was also pointed out that doing so requires teaching students how to use such agency properly and effectively. “It doesn't happen overnight. But when that gets the point where the to where you see the students do everything, almost autonomously, that should be the ideal picture of a classroom. And that leads to much less stress.”

I think I'm free to express my feelings to my class. I think they feel free to express their feelings back to me. And I think that, you know, I try and establish that give and take and help them understand that I learned from them just as much as they learned from me, and that it's a two-way street. It's not all me just giving them
stuff. They have to like, take it and figure it out, and play with it, give it back to me. And that's how we actually learn. That's what the learning process is all about.

One teacher gave his thoughts on placing students in charge of various parts of instruction and management of his classroom as a way to demonstrate that he trusted and respected them and also to help with classroom management.

I would say that one of the most effective things is understanding that if you really look at the teaching domains, there's a huge impact on putting the students in charge. So if I'm trying to run everything myself, that is just so much going on all at once every period. So the more I can pass on to the students and say, ‘hey, you're in charge of this,’ ‘hey, come do this’ ‘hey lead this.’

**Subcategory 3.2. Control and students beyond the classroom.** In establishing relationships beyond the classroom, some teachers have found that they earn a degree of respect from students that then carries back to the classroom in the form of responding favorably to the teacher control in the classroom. But the key part was respect that came when the teacher showed that they care.

…during lunch, I would just let them come in, they could either have a safe space to hang out with or if they needed help, I could help them with their work or whatever. But the majority of my students saw that that was a safe space, and I'd get probably about 30 kids in there every lunch, just sitting in there just hanging out or wanting to talk or whatever.

**Subcategory 3.3. Control with students during COVID remote learning.** Most teachers indicated that the control they had in the classroom was, for the most part, lost
when classes went online. Most expressed frustration over not being able to require students to turn on cameras, not being sure if students were actually there, and the lack of accountability for student attendance.

When I teach alive, normally I don't believe in sitting down around your students. So when I, when I teach live, I walk around the whole time. And so like today, my first day back, that's what I did. And I was able to see where my kids were struggling. And I'm like, oh, put that problem upon the jam board, because we're doing that right there, right now. So I'm able to better support my, my live students in that because I'm physically there. And they can't just ignore me when I tell them to do something. Whereas my online kids, it can be like, ‘Hello’, and they just ignore you. Mostly because they're muted, and not actually there. I know, because I have to kick them out of the Google meet at the end of every class period. drives me nuts. They just like turn off their camera and their mic and just leave.

**Fairness**

Fairness describes the extent to which teachers view decisions made at work as being fair and the extent to which teachers and staff are treated with respect. Teachers who perceive their work environment as being fair feel confirmation of their work and self-worth. Consequently, they will experience greater levels of self-efficacy and reduced emotional exhaustion (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Leiter and Harvie (1997, 1998) observed that employees who feel that their supervisors treat them fairly would be less likely to experience burnout and would be more receptive when change occurred. According to
Leiter and Maslach (2011), fairness shares some of the same qualities that are found in community and reward.

The word cloud (see Figure 7) shown below represents the most common words used by the participating teachers when describing the area of fairness. The top five were teaching/teach/job/work, teacher/teachers, algebra/math, kids/student, and people/parents.

In the analysis of fairness, the five categories that emerged were those of administration and governance, colleagues and school community, work volume and distribution, community and parents, and funding/access to supplies. Of these, administration and governance and work volume and distribution had the most significant number of comments. Each of these two categories was subdivided into smaller subcategories, as described below.

**Figure 7**

*Word Map of Most Common Words Used to Describe Fairness*
**Category 1. Administration and Governance.** Teachers cited a number of experiences involving fairness on the part of administrators. Some interactions were positive, but most described were negative interactions. In the category of administration and governance, several subcategories emerged. The participants discussed fairness in administrative support, compensation, opportunities or promotions, dealings with the NMPED, and being assigned tasks that really did not fall within the typical description of their job.

**Subcategory 1.1 Administration support.** In describing fairness, or the lack thereof, in administrative support that teachers felt, two major threads of thought emerged. Teachers felt that they were often unheard or held in low regard by administrators. They felt that what they perceived to be unfair actions by administrators were because the administrators did not pay attention to what teachers were saying, or if they did, they did not feel that it was worth considering. They felt that their efforts were not valued.

> But I'd send kids to the office because they're out of control. Like they're shouting profanities across my classroom or something like that. And the admin would give them cookies, talk to them nicely, and send them back like they've come back with snacks all the time.

Teachers pointed out that the instances they observed and felt to be unfair were not always directed at just one person. They felt that everyone was treated unfairly. “They kind of screw everyone over fairly. Everybody gets screwed.”

**Subcategory 1.2. Administrative Awareness.** Teachers also expressed that they felt administrators had little, or no, idea what occurred in their classroom. They felt that
reviews and evaluations of their work were based on minimal gathering of information by administrators.

My head of the math department there, he was actually my mentor teacher, when I student taught. So, he used all of my materials from when I student taught, and then he took all of my materials from when I was teaching there. And, you know, my he, at that time, he thought that my work was amazing, you know, and he used it, he still uses it. But then the administration would spend five minutes in my room and say, I was too traditional. And they'd tell me that I need to go to Anthony's room and watch him teach because he has all these amazing projects. And I'm like, ‘hey, assholes, I'm the one that makes those projects.’

Another pointed out how she felt that there were issues with the dossier system and inconsistencies in the grading of dossiers.

I, last year, I was up to do my dossier. And I did my dossier. And I, I mean, I have a master's degree. I was going to school for my doctorate, but I have my Masters, which would qualify me for level three. Um, you know, and I worked my ass off last year, too. And, you know, I even had someone from the PED read my dossier. And then they failed me on all three strands saying I was too vague.

**Category 2. Workload Distribution.** Three sub-categories of concern emerged when teachers interviewed described fairness in workload distribution. Teachers felt that work assignments were often unfair or unbalanced. They expressed that reasons could vary from receiving additional work because they are good at what they do, covering for other teachers who are not as competent, and covering for teachers near retirement who are not pulling their load.
Subcategory 2.1. Additional Work for Doing Good. Teachers expressed concern over being given additional work because they are good at their job. One stated “So, you know, oftentimes, we'll see that when people are just very capable and are able to do more, they kind of get a little bit more responsibility.” Examples given included being assigned to classes that were historically known to be difficult and to being assigned larger numbers of students on IEP’s.

And when I wasn't having tutoring sessions, I was either in meetings, which I have a metric crap ton of, because now I have a third of my kids is IEP kids. Oh, my God, I go to so many IEPs It's ridiculous.

It was not uncommon for teachers to describe situations where they had more courses to teach than other teacher, requiring more preparation time, but were not given more time to prepare during the school day.

And then I had two tutoring sessions because I host tutoring for algebra one and tutoring for algebra two. So compared to teachers that had one prep period, I, I would have twice the tutoring requirements. Which sucks because, for example, who I like, right, he's the one that came across campus to hug me. He said he couldn't do the math for algebra two. So they gave me his algebra two sessions. And he teaches nothing but algebra one. Which means that he only has to prepare materials for one class, like one subject, and only had to do tutoring for one subject. Which, for me, I'm like, why the hell we didn't give him the inclusion as well, if you're just giving him the one prep. Why do I get the harder group and two preps? There's that fairness, right?
Another teacher described the extra work he did as a special education case manager, in addition to his normal course load.

I will say that I am not being paid any extra to be a special education [wind] I, interesting to be one of just a couple teachers who teach two different preps, but have the same pay rate as everybody else. I mean, it's, definitely there's a little more [wind] sometimes, it's like like, well, it's just because you're such a good teacher.

Subcategory 2.2. Unfair or unequal assignment of duties. During interviews, teachers expressed that they were often asked to take on additional tasks, classes, student groups, or duties without receiving adequate, or any, compensation for the additional work and time that the new responsibilities would entail. One gave the example, “I'm the only teacher who has gotten official ELL students you know how you have ELL students that aren't paperwork ELL students. I've gotten all of that paperwork ELL students.”

Others cited multiple examples of extra tasks they had been assigned.

Any work that we take home is strictly for, from our own time, we don't get paid for it, we don't. So everything outside of two, from 2:30 until 7:30 the next morning is from the goodness of my heart. And sometimes it just feels wrong. Like I, some days, I bust my butt for 12, 13, 14-hour workdays, and I don't get compensated for it at all.

One teacher described how she had to do extra preparation for special education students when her school could not find a highly qualified special education instructor to assist her.
So, a third of my students are actually special education. And then they didn't have a co-teacher for a month. And the co-teacher I got didn't know anything about mathematics. And I ended I've been doing her job for quite a while. She just wasn't a good fit. And so she left and now I have a new co-teacher and I have to train her.

Several teachers discussed what they perceived to be inequities in the way that general education teachers were treated compared to how coaches were treated.

Coaches getting away with big things because they win state championships, things that they get, they get better. They get, well, obviously, they get paid more for the for coaching, I'm not mad about that. I'm mad about that they get like the fancier, like fancier lounges, they get all these special privileges. And like, we're just supposed to ignore and bat an eye, or not bat an eye about it.

Subcategory 2.3. Carrying load for late career teachers. Teachers also expressed concerns over inequity in job responsibilities based on tenure or nearness to retirement. They noted that, as younger teachers, they often received additional tasks or job assignments while older teachers had fewer. Teachers nearing retirement would not be held accountable when they didn’t fulfill their job responsibilities. Rather, these responsibilities went to younger teachers. In describing such an experience where an academic team was planning classes, one teacher explained “And so he wrote in for all of our planning there, retired, even though he's still gonna be here, and we're discussing it, but he doesn't want to give any input or do anything with it.”

So, I definitely feel like, me, and maybe one or two other colleagues get a lot of the workload. But I don't feel too bad about it, especially this year now that I'm,
now that I have taken time to think about it, we have half of our teachers are elderly, and like almost about to retire. If not, they're past the retiring age. So I, I feel like, yes, it's the job duties are skewed.

**Reward**

Reward in work life comes in many forms. Teachers experience reward in monetary, social, and intrinsic forms. When teachers feel neglected in areas of reward, whether monetary or social, they may also feel a lack of appreciation for their efforts (Maslach, Jackson, et al., 1996). When teachers see their efforts rewarded appropriately, they experience more satisfaction with their choices as an education professional (Richardsen, Burke, et al., 1992). Teachers who perceive that they are adequately rewarded for their work, who experience the reduced stress levels that come with it, are less likely to experience the emotional exhaustion that can eventually lead to burnout (Leiter & Maslach, 2011).

**Figure 8**

*Word Map of Most Common Words Used to Describe Reward*
The word cloud shown in Figure 8 represents the most common words used by participating teachers in describing the area of reward. The top five were pay/compensation/salary/money, work/teach/teaching/job, people/parents/community, recognition/recognize/appreciate /appreciated, and teachers/teacher/us. In the analysis of the area of reward, the two primary categories that emerged were those of support/reward within the school community and compensation.

**Category 1. Support/reward in the school community.** In discussions of reward that were not focused on salary or monetary incentives, support emerged as a major topic. One person pointed out that “Administration has been supportive. And I like that.” Teachers saw support from administrators and the school community, as well as the community at large as a way of being told that what they were doing in the classroom was right and good.

**Subcategory 1.1. Administrative support/reward.** The importance of receiving support, or encouragement from administrators came up frequently. Positive support or feedback was a crucial part of building self-esteem.

With the administration last year, I definitely felt appreciated. I felt like and and, you know, our interim admin at that time, was very vocal about it, and has really, he actually was really trying to, to get me to consider getting a master’s in administration, so I could become a principal. So that that made me feel good. However, teachers also noted receiving what they felt were insincere positive comments as well.

They did district or the school culture that I came into is very, what is it? ‘rah, rah, rah rah, like, Sis, boom, bah,’ they are always shouting each other out and sending
emails of inspiration. And I came into it thinking it was so insincere, I was like, ‘Oh, my gosh, people, can just mean what we say’ And I think that they really try to foster like, ‘Hey, we all need a pick me up.’ And I think that’s their intention and what they’re trying to do. And I appreciate that.

Teachers also noted that often the only time they received feedback from administrators, it was negative. The only time they ever heard from some administrators was when there was something wrong, or negative, to be said.

It’d be nice if a principal came in once in a while and said something positive. But that’s, that’s just how life is, you know, you don’t get positive feedback, generally, if you’re doing a good job. You’ll only get negative feedback if you need to fix something. And so I don’t do it for the recognition, but it’s still nice to get.

**Subcategory 1.2. General support (inc. colleague, student, parent).** In the area of general support/reward from colleagues, students, and parents, three areas emerged. Teachers expressed that something as simple as verbal support from community members and students was often a reward in itself. One pointed out that “I think the people who do know, I do get recognition from and so that’s, that’s important.”

With the students, I do feel appreciated, for the most part. I think just the fact that I feel like we have mutual respect for each other, just because we have taken the time to kind of establish those connections and relationships. I do feel like I’m appreciated by most of the students, if not all.

The appreciation teachers received in various forms from parents and students was mentioned several times.
There’s a good handful of parents that have expressed their appreciation for me, and things that I do and the understandings that I try to give to them, their family and whatever situation. So that really makes me happy.

One teacher discussed parents and community members and how they did, or did not, know what was done in the classroom.

There are some parents and some community members who really understand what we do here. They know or have been in our classrooms, they've seen us teach, they know who we are as people. And so those are the people I think that probably matter, and they recognize us and anybody else who just doesn’t know, I guess it just doesn’t matter. I don’t know. It’s not worth my time thinking about?

However, they also pointed out that a lack of general recognition of what they do in the classroom could be equally negative.

Speaking with parents this year, you know, lots of parents are saying that they, you know, there’s ‘our support is behind you’ But um, that’s just a complicated relationship, parents and teachers, because we’re both doing the same job.

One teacher described how they put everything they had into teaching and really did not feel that they received respect in return.

I put absolutely everything that I have into my teaching when I'm here, and then when it's life I put everything I have into life. And so, um, I don’t think people respect that as much as they should. I don’t think that people know actually that I teach that way. So if I do get criticism or you know non recognition, I think I”s just because people don’t know, or don’t care to know.
When asked if she felt adequately recognized by the district or community for her efforts at the school, one teacher replied, “My first answer would be no because I just don’t think teachers get enough recognition in any way, and of course we always would enjoy more recognition for the hard work that we put in.”

Several teachers indicated that just working with students is a reward in itself. They expressed how, intrinsically, they felt rewarded by just being around their students. “The relationships that I form with the kids and just how excited I am to see them and then just the excitement that they get back to see me and that’s so validating.” Several teachers mentioned missing the contact with students. They felt that seeing their students daily was a reward in itself and COVID restrictions had made it difficult to enjoy teaching. “Without the students in person you don’t get that same validation and so it makes it really difficult.” They also pointed out that while teachers rarely go into teaching to be appreciated, it is an important validation of what they do when students or parents provide positive comments on their work. “Teachers probably don’t go into the profession for validation because we very rarely get it. but when you do get it it's very very important and the students are what provide that for me”

**Category 2. Compensation/pay.** Teachers were asked if they felt that the salary they received was adequate and appropriate for the job that they do. Most indicated that they did not feel that the salary was adequate, especially considering the additional time they had to put in. Others expressed satisfaction and pointed out that compensation can come in other ways.

**Subcategory 2.1. Satisfaction with Income.** Some teachers indicated that they felt fairly compensated for the time they put into teaching. One also noted that the amount
she received was adequate because she didn’t have time to spend it and, living in rural New Mexico, didn’t have places to spend it. She also pointed out that in her community, it was the norm for many generations to live in the same household. She pointed out “So, in terms of a salary, I think I'm compensated well.” Others, for whom COVID based changes to online learning had resulted in reduced stress and a shorter workday, said “But this year, it feels like enough. Especially because I feel like I get paid for the days I work.” Others, feeling the crunch of how much time they were required to invest in their job said “You know, I can get so much money, but if I don’t have time to spend it, or enjoy it, you know, it’s like, I don’t have it anyway. In a way.”

_Subcategory 2.2. Dissatisfaction with income._ Most teachers indicated that they were not satisfied with their income level. Several expressed that with the amount of time they put in, particularly outside of the class, they should make more. “So, I was putting in a lot of time and a lot of myself. And that didn’t feel like enough.” One was very specific in citing the lack of pay increase from year to year in one of New Mexico’s largest school districts. Another noted that the increment for teachers with a doctorate is very small. One pointed out that just money wasn’t enough compensation for the time, energy, and effort teachers put into their job. “But at the same time, the way that I feel about it is like, sometimes compensation just isn’t enough.”

One teacher gave an example of a pay scale that she felt was insulting to teachers.

I would like to get paid more. When everyone, I wish that there were maybe simpler channels to do that. It was one of the reasons I didn’t even take my interviews at APS seriously is because, you know, their pay scales are public. And
you see Oh, you can work for one for a year and your pay raise is $1. Just keep it the same, that $1 is insulting.

Another pointed out that the increment for completing higher education, particular a Ph.D. did not appear to be taken seriously by the school district.

If I had not quit on my doctorate, I was looking at the pay scale, and I would make an additional $6 a year more for my doctorate. I could buy one Starbucks drink a year more with a doctorate. So, like, what the hell would be the point?"

Another provided the example of hours outside of the contract day that they had to use to meet the expectations in her area of work.

…any work that we take home is strictly for, from our own time, we don’t get paid for it, we don’t. So everything outside of two, from 2:30 until 7:30 the next morning is from the goodness of my heart. And sometimes it just feels wrong.

Like I, some days, I bust my butt for 12, 13, 14-hour work days, and I don’t get compensated for it at all.

**Subcategory 2.3. Other forms of compensation.** Teachers expressed that while monetary compensation was important, it wasn’t enough. Personal support from colleagues and others as well as time away from the classroom were indicated as important areas of support and, in some ways, recognition for teachers. Some of those interviewed pointed out the time off that they received during school breaks, citing it a form of compensation. “I am not dissatisfied with the amount of time off I get in terms of spring break, Thanksgiving break, Christmas break, summer, things like that.” Another stated that she felt like she was paid in time. The most common non-monetary compensation mentioned was recognition by others of what teachers were doing and how
difficult it was, with one pointing out that “I think the biggest compensation of all doesn’t have anything to do with the tangible.”

The way that I'm recognized is we have one person in our district who really early on knew what they had in me and so he’s been so supportive in ‘Hey, I need a box of gloves.’ ‘Okay, great. ’ll get it for you.’ ‘Hey, I need, we’re gonna need some goggles, goggles sanitizer stations. Can we buy a cabinet?’ ‘Sure, yeah, I got you covered.’ ‘Oh, hey, I wrote for this grant and got all these microscopes for, you know, for free. This is awesome. Can you buy me a cabinet so I can store them?’

‘Sure thing, no problem.”

Comments regarding the role of colleagues in feeling appreciated were frequent.

And that’s it, that’s really all you need is just that little ‘hey, we’re in this together’ And so that’s, that’s really helpful. In terms of getting recognition from other people, my, my colleagues, I think, are probably in the same boat as me.

Values

Values are the ideals and motivations that originally drew teachers to the classroom. It is that which goes beyond a paycheck or promotions. Values center around personal goals that motivate a teacher to stay in the job, even when experiencing emotional exhaustion. Unfortunately, teachers sometimes find that their personal values are at odds with the values of the school or district for which they work and, sometimes, also in conflict with the community in which they teach (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011b). The greater this gap, the less self-efficacy the teacher will experience and the more emotional exhaustion they will feel (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). Leiter and Harvie (1997)
demonstrated that dissonance between employee and organizational values are related to all areas of burnout.

The word cloud shown in Figure 9 represents the most common words used by participating teachers in describing the area of values. The top five were kids/kid/human/student, work/teach/teaching/job, understanding/care/goals/giving/respect (this cluster included words expressing specific types of values), learning/learn/education, and teacher. In the analysis of values, the three key categories that emerged were students, administration and governance, and teaching practice.

**Figure 9**

*Word Map of Most Common Words Used to Describe Values*

Category 1. Students. The values about which teachers expressed the strongest feelings were those related to students. In each of the six areas of the AWS, the value that
teachers placed on items related to students came through clearly. Four subcategories emerged strongly. Teachers do what they do because they care about kids. Teachers are not only concerned that students learn what they need to know, but that they learn it at the right time. This also can include skills that extend beyond the classroom. Beyond the role of teacher, or in addition to it, teachers value developing trusting relationships with students. However, regardless of how sincere a teacher’s values regarding students may be, they will sometimes find their values in conflict with a student’s values.

**Subcategory 1.1. Teachers do what they do because they care about kids.** In the interviews, teachers were not asked directly if they care about kids. However, in discussing what they do and why they do it, multiple comments were made that indicated how much the teachers interviewed do care about kids, as shown in these interview segments.

- I just I really care about the students.
- And we have always tried to put the students and the families first
- They're not my students, they're my kids.

In describing their values and how those values related to students, teachers gave specific examples of what they did to make a difference for students. They described the importance of paying attention to students, citing, “When students feel seen and still heard, I think that that really kind of gives them more value and adds to their lives.” They also explained why they thought caring mattered to their students.

I'd take my lunch and I'd actually sit on the floor next to him in the hall. I just eat lunch next to him. We didn't have to talk I would just…[background noise]… I would just eat with him. Be near him.
When asked about returning to the classroom, teachers expressed concern, not only over their own health, but also that of students. One pointed out, “Um, I, I'm not ready. I would love to see the students. But I'm concerned about their health.”

Subcategory 1.2. Teacher values related to curriculum and lesson planning.

Teachers were concerned that students learn what they need to know when they need to learn it, including skills that extend beyond the classroom. While teachers in these interviews expressed concerns about being required to use scripted lessons, they also pointed out that they value teaching the right thing at the right time. They also mentioned value-based practices and lessons that extend beyond the classroom.

Some expressed a desire for guidance from administrators, testing, and society in general to understand what was desired for their students. One requested help to “…understand specifically what students need to learn more, in order to get to the grade level that we're at right now.” At the same time teachers want to know what is valued in the topic they are teaching, they also want students to value what is expected. One pointed out that they “…make sure my students know the expectations in the classroom, that respect is my number one rule, you don't have to like everybody, but you do have to respect everybody.”

Good teachers tend to be passionate about their subject. They also take their role in educating students personally, often feeling that if they don’t do a good job, the student will never learn what is needed, saying that “I feel like it's my personal responsibility to teach my students science. And if they don't get it from me, they're not going to get it.” However, it was also pointed out that teachers have a greater role than just delivering instruction in a subject area. One pointed out that “Number one is just to develop a
student into a human being… And so just basic human being lessons, I think, is a really
important goal that I have.” Another observed the importance of a well-rounded
education, saying:

I only hope that I'm doing what I can to, you know, encourage kids not only in
science but to understand the world and be curious about the world and you know,
all the other things that go with the well-rounded education.

In discussing the importance of what they did as a teacher, another summed it by
saying “And since COVID, it's really opened my eyes to understand that it doesn't really
have anything to do with teaching, it has to do with the kids.”

Subcategory 1.3. Teacher relationships with students. Beyond the act of
teaching, most teachers value developing relationships and establishing trust with
students. In this subcategory, teachers expressed that respect is a two-way street.
Teachers mentioned the importance of establishing relationships with the students and
that students will often not want to learn from a teacher they don’t respect and who they
think doesn’t care about them. The importance of communication and trust was expressed
by a teacher who said “…if a student can't trust me, or talk to me or hear me, then they're
not going to learn anything from me. So establishing those relationships is like the most
important thing.”

Another teacher described how she was able to show students that she cared about
them, saying, “I think the best way for me to kind of encourage and motivate our students
is just by getting to know them on a more personal level.” Students don’t necessarily see
teachers as being human, making it difficult to establish trust. To solve this, one teacher
said “But you know what? Over the years, I've realized, like, I let them see that I'm
human. And they relate to that they, respond to that.” Another talked about getting to
know their students by learning their stories.

“So I think that one of the things that is very important to me is to really know the
stories of your kids. You've got to talk to them, you've got to get to know them on
a personal level, you've got to understand what they're going through, right?”

**Subcategory 1.4. Conflict with Student Values.** Sometimes teachers find that
their values are in conflict with student values. There were two areas where this emerged.
One was in the area of trust, with one teacher point out “So, I'm constantly giving zeros
for, for cheating on work. And then I'm getting a lot of backlash from parents for it, for
them cheating.” Another pointed out trust and value issues during COVID dealing with
students “showing up” online for class, “I expect the same thing from students, but I can't
really mandate them, they have to come” [Referring to online attendance by students].
They also expressed concern over the lack of support they received from parents in
enforcing rules surrounding cheating and attendance.

**Category 2. Administration/Governance.** In describing administrative values, most
discussion centered on areas of dissonance. However, some instances of similarities in
values were also expressed. Teachers expressed concerns that school leadership lacked
true concern and compassion for students.

**Subcategory 2.1. Dissonance with administrative values.** Teachers expressed
concerns that administrators in schools lacked compassion and were not truly student
centered. In one instance, it was pointed out that an administrator transferring from a
larger to a smaller district or school might be more interested in policy than in students or
staff. Teachers felt that while they put students and families first, administrators did not
always do so, stating “And we have always tried to put the students and the families first, when creating our policies and thinking of how to handle certain situations. And I just kind of feel like that compassion, isn't there.” They also expressed concern that administrators coming from larger districts would not understand the smaller district dynamics and how smaller communities tend to be more tight knit. One teacher said:

This year, with change in administration, and with our administrator coming from a more larger public school district, I feel like she's more policy base. And I don't think she understands the, how flexible we actually can be in terms of the decisions that we make.

Other teachers expressed concerns about a lack of student-centered planning in the overall state educational system, citing that “When it comes to the whole education system and kind of how the PED runs things and expects, you know, certain achievements, is not very student centered. “Another teacher expressed concerns about a district decision to begin student grades at 59%, without any work having been completed or submitted.

...they would set your quarter one grade to a 59%. Which I thought was complete bullshit. Because then if you didn't do any effort in quarter one, you could still pass and I didn't think that was fair, because I had so many kids that were working their asses off. You know what I'm saying? Like, I had kids that just genuinely tried their hardest. And I felt like that was a disrespect to them. And so now they're doing it with quarter three again… Like my my head principal sent out a thing saying he didn't agree with it either. But, there it is. But they're doing it with quarter three. So if you fail quarter three, but you pass quarter four, I'm being
required to set your grade to a 59%. And I think that's complete shit. I don't think that that's going to get a good student. Sorry for the language. You know, like right now, like, I'll have kids tell me, what's the point in trying, you're just going to have to pass me anyway. And so the, the motivation has gone down because the school has demonstrated that, yeah, they'll just let them pass.

**Subcategory 2.2. Congruence with administrative values.** Some teachers did indicate points of congruence between their values and administrators values in the school. One described the boost she received to her self confidence from an administrator who would frequently compliment her work. She explained “…all she’d want to do is say, like, ‘Hey, I walked by your classroom and saw how great you were doing’ or something like that.” Another also described boosts they received to their self-efficacy, stating “My administrators are, for the most part would be extremely supportive of whatever I choose to, whichever route I choose to go.”

**Category 3. Teaching practice.** Teachers expressed many values related to their job. Most were directed at students. However, teachers also expressed a number of values that informed how they approach their job in the classroom.

**Subcategory 3.1. Taking responsibilities personally.** Many, if not most, teachers take their responsibilities personally. This extends to the hours beyond the classroom. Teachers described being unable to forget what they needed to be doing to prepare for class. Some were constantly looking for examples that could be used in particular lessons stating that “I will always lesson planning always thinking about like, you know, I mean, I teach math. So I want real world examples.” All expressed that they did not really leave their work at the school.. stating that “…I don’t put my work away.
Subcategory 3.2. Conflicts between workload and values. Some teachers expressed concerns that their workload was impacting their classroom practices, keeping them from covering material that was required in standards, and keeping them from doing what they felt was best for their students. They explained that their teaching responsibilities would be hurt, stating “Teaching really kind of took the backburner, because there were so many other things that I felt like had priority, because it affected the whole school, and not just, you know, a class of students.” As a result, some were required to adopt a more rigid approach to their teaching, citing instances of being more strict in how they would allocate their time.

Workload

Workload is an obvious stressor for people in all occupations. For teachers, this could take the form of teaching multiple courses, being assigned additional duties, and being asked to produce documentation and evaluation of student progress. When the amount of work requested exceeded the ability of a teacher to perform it in a reasonable time or when a teacher was unable to recover from a period of intensive work prior to beginning another round of the same, the excessive workload could lead to emotional exhaustion and burnout (Maslach et al., 2001). Lee and Ashforth (1996) and Leiter and Harvie (1998) showed excessive workload to mediate the relationship between emotional exhaustion and the other two parameters of burnout. Continued, chronic work overload could result in diminished work performance and could have an effect on an employee’s home life (Leiter & Maslach, 2011). In contrast, a sustainable workload enabled employees feel that they were accomplishing the tasks for which they were hired, reducing emotional exhaustion and increasing self-efficacy (Leiter & Maslach, 2011).
The word cloud shown in Figure 10 represents the most common words used by participating teachers in describing workload. The top five were work/teaching/planning/lesson/grading/tutoring/job, kids/student, semester/preps/periods/sessions/schedule, algebra/math/mathematics, and school. In the thematic analysis of the area of values, the five categories that emerged were work volume, teacher self, students, teaching practice, and administration and governance. The impact of teacher workloads on students, on teacher ability to prepare quality lessons for students, and on teacher ability to work one-on-one with students emerged strongly. The impact of uneven distributions of workload and the impact it has on teacher morale and ability to efficiently conduct their job also emerged strongly. Interview segments regarding the impact of workload on students and the uneven distribution of workload by administration have been presented elsewhere in the results section and will not be repeated here. The other three are given below. It should be noted that the increase in the number of quotes given is reflective of the
amount of time teachers spent speaking to this area and to the intensity with which they spoke.

**Category 1. Work volume.** In describing the work they were expected to do, teachers expressed that they loved doing what they do for kids, but that the sheer volume of work left them exhausted and not able to take care of other tasks. They describe both the positive and negative impacts of moving instruction online. They also described activities they performed that were above and beyond that which was expected of them.

**Subcategory 1.1 Teacher dislike of overload.** While they enjoyed teaching, all of the teachers expressed dislike of the extra work, beyond teaching and engaging with students, that went with the job, and that potentially lead to emotional exhaustion.

Teaching is a demanding, stressful job and often, there isn’t adequate time to unwind. When the discussed work overload in a general sense, several threads emerged as teachers described the impact on class prep, home life, and on their personal health. One teacher cited the time that curriculum development was taking them, saying “Curriculum development is just what kills me. And creating those resources. And that’s where a lot of my time goes.” While they enjoyed the teaching, teachers described disliking the extra work that went with the job and that could potentially lead to emotional exhaustion.

I don’t like being a teacher because I don’t like all of the planning. I don’t like the documentation. I went through my first SAT process and it’s just a lot of a lot of work. You know, and I understand the reasoning for it and I do understand how it can be helpful and impactful for the student, but I just don’t, I just feel like this is just so much more work that I have to do. You know, so it’s just more so like the
all the documentation. I don’t enjoy the grading aspect. I don’t like, yeah. And I really don’t like, like the classroom management aspect of it.

A science teacher taking part in the study described the increased workload that science teachers could encounter when it came time to prepare labs.

I think one of my main issues with the amount of work that I have to do is prepping. So for science, there’s a lot of prep work that has to go on in terms of making sure labs are set up and papers and demos and all that good stuff and I don’t think any of the other teachers really understand that. They can sympathize but they can’t empathize. So that’s a tough part and I don’t mind prepping labs.

but I hate breaking them down.

Teachers who were also tasked as special education managers, or who had a large percentage of special education students in their classes frequently pointed out that even though that increase in their duties took more time, the school rarely provided the extra preparation time or compensation.

So, I’m also a special education case manager, which means that when it comes time for quarterly reports, you better believe I’m going home and still writing a bunch of those. Just because, as mentioned, there’s not enough time in the day and there’s the legal obligation to make sure that’ve got comments and responses for every single student who I have an IEP for, which we have a caseload of 30 is quite a few kids.

Some teachers indicated that they were so conditioned by the heavy workloads they faced that they felt guilty if they had even a minute where they are not working. One described being unable to enjoy any time away from her job duties, “…I just feel like any
second that I'm not working, just makes me feel so guilty, because I know there's so much work to do.”

**Subcategory 1.2. Inadequate time to prepare and perform job tasks.** Teachers indicated that they were often so busy taking care of the various extra tasks assigned to them that they actually didn’t have time to perform the job for which they were hired, that of preparing and teaching lessons and evaluating student performance. One teacher described the impact of her special education duties on her preparation for classes, “Oh, my God, I go to so many IEPs it’s ridiculous. So, if I wasn’t in meetings, I could do resource development.” Another pointed out that “With our current schedule, I don't think it's fair because I don't have enough prep time.” Others expressed similar concerns, saying:

To be honest, sometimes, especially last year, teaching really kind of took the backburner, because there were so many other things that I felt like had priority, because it affected the whole school, and not just, you know, a class of students. So there are definitely some days where I was just like, I don't have anything for you guys to do, because I just didn't have the time.

One described activities they would like to bring into the classroom that they thought would benefit their students.

I would love to be able to incorporate more mindfulness into my classes. It's something that I've been doing a lot of research on, I've been compiling a lot of activities and things for mindfulness. It's something that I think is important for our students in their mental health and understanding how to cope with some of their crazy issues that they come from, and send them out later in life to be
able to cope with those crazy things. But I just don't have time, I don't have time
to do that.
Another described how the constant grind of preparing, grading, and reporting consumed
all of their time.
I just don't have time to do it. I, there's times where somebody is like, ‘well, I
texted you this morning.’ I'm like, ‘I haven't looked at my phone since like last
night when I went to bed.’ And that's just the truth of it. I don't have time to mess
around with that. I'm always busy doing something else, and so during the school
day, it's none, it's none of me. It's all me giving to other people. Which is fine.
That's my job. But it's tiring, it really is tiring.
Teachers gave mixed responses regarding the impact the COVID pandemic has had
on their workload. Some indicate that they feel that it has freed up some time for them,
pointing out that “I would say in the before times, it felt like I had never enough time I
was constantly in a state of behind,” and “I can kind of end first period a little earlier and
have some time to work on my next period or, you know, a little time here and there.”
Others indicate that it has made an already difficult workload even harder to do, saying
“This is the hardest I've ever worked as a teacher.”

**Subcategory 1.3. Extra mile.** Teachers described various ways that they continued to
do their job outside of regular work hours. Some cited summer programs where they
taught incoming freshman. Others gave tutoring programs as an example, saying “You
know I'm available for tutoring every single day from you know, for two hours, you can
come in person, you can do it online, there's no barriers here.” All teachers interviewed
expressed that they put in many more hours per week than most people would expect.
One pointed out that “I usually swing pretty well with the punches, to be honest. Now, that being said, I usually work anywhere from 60 to 80 hours a week as a teacher.”

Among the extra work teachers engaged in were support and attendance at extra-curricular activities. One teacher expressed it well, saying “But I would try and go and visit my students and encourage them in their endeavors. But that was my own.”

All teachers interviewed expressed care and concern for their students. As such, they felt that meeting student needs was very important. One stated “But if you are a teacher, you probably should not do the bare minimum required to you by the state.” This meant that teachers should plan on doing such things as after school tutoring and preparing additional online instructional materials.

My work is always with me. I will always lesson planning always thinking about like, you know, I mean, I teach math. So I want real world examples. I have sycamore trees in my front yard, and they dropped those annoying itch balls. So I clean my yard and I’m working to get those stupid itch balls that I have to sweep up because they don't blow with a leaf blower and I see that the formula of a sphere, the derivation of the volume of a sphere is in those itch balls. Bam, what do I do? collect a bunch of those itch balls and drag them into the classroom.

**Subcategory 1.4 Virtual learning.** Teacher workload during the pandemic was met with a variety of experiences. Some expressed concerns that already heavy workloads increased even more during that time. Some expressed that online instruction resulted in additional work, citing “Another one of my huge hang ups is I teach online all day. And then I've got a grade online too, and so I get so far behind on grading.” It was also pointed out that it was difficult to fit in all of the needed
instruction, “It's difficult to fit the things in that I want to fit in, especially during the shortened class periods that we've had during virtual learning.” Most also described difficulties they experienced by not having students physically present.

So, I think that one of the things that's absolutely the hardest with the online teach... teaching is I don't know where my kids are. If I can't look them in the eyes, I can't tell where they are in [wind noise] physical space, and a mental space and spiritual space like I just, I can't check in with those kids. And for me, that's, that's a tough one, and has been for a long time.

Others discussed how the apparent workload they experienced was reduced. One described how she typically spent her time out of class online, so that the switch during pandemic allowed her to teach in an environment with which she was already familiar, “So yeah, so like the I get more time in between classes that allow allows me to spend more time planning for for them.” One teacher pointed out that she enjoyed working on the computer, and therefore, “But that being said, I'm also a huge computer nerd. So like I, I live my life online, essentially. So my job switching to be online was kind of nice, to be honest with you.”

Some of those interviewed felt that online instruction took more time, but others described an environment in which they actually were able to do more and use less time.

For virtual learning, it's been a lot easier. I'm rolling in about 7:15. You know, real easy prep, classes start at 7:45. And so it's not too bad. I don't have to make copies, so that's nice. And then also with virtual learning, I've been able to use the time that I have in between classes to continue to prep. And so I don't have to have everything done before first period. I can kind of end first period a little
earlier and have some time to work on my next period or, you know, a little time here and there. And that's been really nice about virtual learning. So I do get those breaks.

**Category 2. Teacher self.** Teachers described how their workload impacted their personal time and time with their families and their health. Teachers pointed out that the amount of time they had to devote to their job was impacting their relationships with others. They pointed out that it was difficult to find time for even the simplest tasks that they might do to recover from a stressful day or week.

**Subcategory 2.1. Workload Impact on Personal Life.** Teachers expressed how they were taking care of many job responsibilities they had and how they tried to keep from taking work or work issues home. They described trying to leave their work at school, but how difficult it could be. One pointed out that “I'm going to have to make a conscientious decision to leave my work at home [*sic*]. But sometimes you just can't do that because there's deadlines.” Another described trying to make a conscious decision to leave work at the school, but having colleagues who seemed unable to do so.

I try to leave most of my work at work. I know, there's another teacher who works at the school with us. She always leaves her computer at, at the school, because she'd never, she has philosophy to never take her homework home with her, which I agree is a really good philosophy. But some days, I'm just like, “I just want to get out of here but I need, things I need to do.” So that's my [unclear], I guess. Long story short is I do take my work home with me quite a bit. I just don't, I just don't drop it.
Most of those interviewed had stories of how their workload intruded into their personal lives. One described ongoing contacts from students, saying, “My kids email me constantly and I'm very good about responding to emails. My work does not go away.” Several described the impact that their job had to personal relationships and how the demands on their time could be unfair, “Districts, teaching at large wants teachers to be parents, and I frankly, believe that's not my position. It's just, that is an emotionally taxing. And it's unfair to the other relationships in our lives. Like I can't.” Another described having difficulties leaving school at the end of the day because there was still so much to be done.

That's why I'm already here half hour after work. I'm already here an hour after work…, I had to put an alarm in my phone at 5:35. The school day ends at 4:30. I've got to put an alarm on my phone, that I go home, otherwise, I'm gonna sit, and I'm gonna be working past what I need to do. My wife would get furious with me. she's like, “why are you still there at six o'clock? your workday ends at 4:30?”

One of those interviewed taught at a small, rural school along with her husband. She described a strategy they had developed to deal with the heavy workload while keeping a priority on their relationship.

Then we, my husband and I make a rule that you leave work at work, and home is at home. And so any grading we do and stuff we'll come into school or any work we want to catch up on, we'll come into school to do that, or do it before we leave school. So I think that's a good rule, even if it does make it a little more stressful to get it done before the end of the day. I think it's a really good rule to have and it's been good to maintain a healthy work life balance as well.
Subcategory 2.2. Workload impact on teacher recovery time. An important part of reducing the effects of emotional exhaustion is recovery time (Shoki, et al., 2016; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011b). Recovery can be as simple as watching TV or as complex as taking classes. One teacher described painting as a way to recover, but being unable to find time, due to her workload. Teachers spoke about their inability to find time for themselves, time to recover, due to their heavy workload. Such a lack of personal time could lead to increased emotional exhaustion (Shoki, et al., 2016).

And maybe if I even if I did have the time, like the number of minutes in the day that would, I would need to do it, it would be to the detriment of any other personal time, you know, where I just need a freaking five minute break to play some candy crush, or I need to just go to the bathroom and not hear another person for the next five minutes. And finding those moments are what's difficult. And I think that's what contributes to the exhaustion at the end of the day. It's just it's go, go go go go with no chance to breathe.

Another teacher described how their weekends, a time most other workers would use to recover, is often a time used to catch up and to plan, allowing little time to recover.

Friday is just like a lay low, you got to recover from the weekday, and then have Saturday and Sunday. But you know, Sunday you come in and you lesson plan, and then that's, you pretty much just have Saturday. So, it's, day in and day out, it's tough to maintain that schedule, it's tough to find the time to prep, it's tough to find the time to grade.

Category 3. Teaching Practice. Teachers pointed out several areas where their workload impacted their teaching practice. They felt that the intense workload was
impacting their own opportunities to seek out professional development. They also expressed concerns about having adequate time to prepare the dossiers that the New Mexico Public Education Department (NM PED) requires for advancement in its 3-tier system.

Subcategory 3.1. Not enough time to do everything. Teachers pointed out frequently that they did not have enough time to do their job because they were too busy working. One pointed out that using the district mandated curriculum took too much time, and she was pressed for time to be ready for classes. She pointed out that “It's too much time to try and continue making a Desmos for every single lesson for two different preps and prepare all the physical hard copies of things.” Another stated that some important parts of her job were falling by the side, due to her workload, saying “I cannot tell you the last time I gave a phone call to a parent. And there are so many I need to do. Why? Because there's just so many other things that keep coming up.”

Other teachers pointed out that they felt there were trade-offs that they had to make, missing some important parts of their curriculum because they couldn’t fit them in, pointing out that “I also feel like I'm not fulfilling all of the expectations, you know, that the PED has, because I know all of the standards that I would have to teach.” Another stated “Because we don't have the time investment for me as a teacher to put all the components together. So, there are there are exchanges. There are absolutely exchanges.” One described having so much to do that they would sometimes forget what was coming up, “And so you just kind of forget about some of those things. You're like, ‘Oh, wait, there's a test I have tomorrow.’” Yet another pointed out that:
No, you have to choose to sacrifice some things. And so there are some things that don't get done. And that's, that's why I'm gonna ask my principals, see if I can come in and get some curriculum development done over the summer, because otherwise it doesn't get done.

Workloads were given as a primary reason that teachers felt they were not able to do their best in the classroom and unable to prepare what they felt to be the lessons most needed by their students. In this environment where teachers fail to feel successful, self-efficacy will begin to diminish and emotional exhaustion will soon set in. One teacher cited an example of a colleague who was working 70 hours per week to just meet the requirements of her district:

There's somebody else in my district who I'm good friends with and she is logging 70 hours, which is insane. 70 hours a week. She's staying up all night and, and part of it is because her administration totally screwed her on her schedule. She's teaching every grade level. And so she feel it, so she's like trying to, she's trying to make sure that she knows the content well enough to teach it and grit and assign you lots and lots of work for it, where I tried to advise her, like, just less is more, but she can't, more is more, you know.

Subcategory 3.2. Professional Development. Teachers also pointed out that either the workload kept them from attending professional development that they thought would be a benefit for them, or that mandated professional development was a waste of their time, when they could be preparing for classes instead. One described suspending work on a graduate degree due to the demands of her teaching position:
But I stepped back because you know, we had the new textbook, where I'm the PLC leader. So I needed to help develop the materials for it and need to understand how it works and needed to learn how to teach online because that was new, you know, and I said, ‘Well, there's so much stuff there, I don't want to get stretched thin and do a shitty job.’ So I stepped back.

Another described their expectations as schools moved from online teaching back to in-person. She cited examples of professional development that she felt would be lost:

This year, I had afternoons to do work at, during school hours, or grading and stuff like that, and prep and collaborating with my peers. And we even had an additional day to do that. We would have Wednesday's off for team meetings and staff meetings and professional development. And so that provided a lot of time to do those things. But when we go back to normal next year, I that time will be, will be gone.

**Emotional Exhaustion**

Maslach et al. (1996) described emotional exhaustion as feelings of being exhausted and overwhelmed by the work one does. If the conditions leading to emotional exhaustion become chronic, preventing teachers from having adequate recovery time, teachers will speak about being continually overwhelmed, tired all of the time, and exhausted. When these conditions exist, teacher’s self-efficacy will be significantly reduced, as will their ability to perform their job, their level of burnout will increase, and they will no longer be able to meet the needs of students as their job calls for and as they wish to do. Additionally, increases in a teacher’s level of burnout can result in more
frequent physical illness (Honkonen, et al., 2006; Thorsen, et al., 2019) as well as mental health decline (Capone & Petrillo, 2020).

**Figure 11**

*Word Map of Most Common Words Used to Describe Emotional Exhaustion*

The word cloud shown in Figure 11 represents the most common words used by participating teachers in describing emotional exhaustion. The top five were teaching/prep/working/job/work, stress/ stressful/stressed, teacher/us/person, school, and changing/changes. During the analysis of the interviews conducted, four categories emerged. The largest area to emerge was that of teacher self, or how emotional exhaustion was impacting the teacher in terms of job-related exhaustion and stress in addition to impacts to personal health. Another category was that of the impacts to the classroom as a teacher began to experience emotional exhaustion. These impacts were seen in how teachers dealt with work overload, change, and classroom management, and
what other negative impacts emotional exhaustion had on teaching. The third category to emerge was that of how emotional exhaustion impacted relationships, whether professional or personal. Last was the actual impact the emotional exhaustion has on the teachers’ professional identity in terms of negative impacts on their career and consideration of retirement. The input into the last two categories was minimal and is covered in other areas in the results, so it was not presented again here.

**Category 1. Teacher Self.** Emotional exhaustion takes a toll. During interviews with teachers, two subcategories emerged where emotional exhaustion was impacting teachers and their practice. Exhaustion and stress from job requirements emerged as a major impact on teachers trying to do their best in the classroom. Additionally, issues with personal health were mentioned a number of times.

**Subcategory 1.1. Exhaustion/Stress.** Every person interviewed indicated that teaching is a hard job. It is even more difficult when you are exhausted. What exhausted most teachers was doing their job and teaching. One teacher described how he felt at the end of each day of teaching, saying “…those days when I come home, I'm just exhausted. I don't want to talk to anyone, I don't want, I don't really want to do anything. I want to sit down and relax” Others described being constantly tired. One pointed out that it was their job, but “…it's tiring, it really is tiring.” Another stated that “It's just, it's hard. And I'm tired. And I think that sentiment that every single teacher who is doing their job properly is going to tell you, it's hard and I'm tired.”

Several pointed out that they felt elevated stress levels, typically feeling “…stressed out.” One described the stress they were feeling as schools prepared to return to in person learning, saying “And so, coming back live has been a very large source of stress for
Another described the stress that they felt when their workload kept them from completing tasks assigned by administrators in a timely manner:

That stresses me out quite a bit. And I just can’t, I just want to respond to them say, ‘I’m doing the best I can leave me alone’. But I'm, I just tell them it's going to be done in soon. I just need to catch up on some things. That’s stressful

Another described struggle with anxiety brought on as a result of the stress they experienced on their job:

I struggle, I struggle with anxiety a lot. And so I have a hard time sleeping pretty regularly. And so on the weekends, when I don't have to teach the next day, a lot of times, I'll just sleep for quite a while because I'm running on five hours of sleep a night throughout the week. Yeah, I've been struggling with that a lot lately.

**Subcategory 1.2 Personal Health.** Personal health issues as a consequence of stress that teachers experience in the workplace also emerged. Marais-Opperman et al. (2021) demonstrated that teachers demonstrate three stress profiles, distressed, moderately stressed, and self-efficacious. Those who are in the distressed category were shown to have the most adverse effects on their mental health. This aligned with what one of the teachers interviewed pointed out, “But I think that one of the things that really have to adapt with that is how you kind of overcome that stress. If you're one of those people that cannot handle change, teaching is not for you.” Cormier et al. (2021) discussed the impact of job stresses on teacher physical health and socioemotional state. All the teachers interviewed indicated that they experienced stress almost every day on the job. They were often too busy to engage in de-stressing activities or to utilize resources that they knew could help them deal with the stress.
Following from the previous subcategory, teachers frequently mentioned the physical effects of stress. Some cited specific instances of physical and mental issues that they felt arose from the stress. Among their comments were the following:

- I get really stressed out very easily, I get overwhelmed very easily.
- …but it's just so much work and I'm just so tired.
- So, it's really hard to stress or de stress and relax.
- I'm mentally exhausted, I am physically exhausted, but my creativity, I don't, I don't have an outlet for that.
- It was a struggle every single day and like I said I've had a lot of personal mental health issues due to COVID.

For some, the unresolved stress was creating or contributing to health issues.

I probably was more hopeless than I'd ever been in my entire life this year. And it wasn't just teaching, it was personal as well, you know, my husband and I have some significant medical history that we've been through, that added some stress to COVID.

Another teacher pointed out that he felt a teacher should have an identity that extended beyond the job, if they were to succeed under the load of stress teachers experience, "...if a teacher is the kind of person who, teaching is their identity, they're going to find that it is a much more stressful and demanding job.” Yet another pointed out that they were too exhausted from work to do things that they knew would be good for their health, “I would never think about trying to exercise after school and so, you know, my own health takes a toll in some regards because I’m just so exhausted.” Another cited an example of thinking so much about his students that he would forget to eat, “And there are many
things where, or there are days where I just think about my students, I don't even think about myself don't even, like eat or anything, I just think about my students.”

**Category 2. Classroom Impacts.** Teachers described not only the effects of exhaustion on themselves, but also described the ways in which their exhaustion was beginning to have an impact on their classes and teaching. They described how the workload cut into time they needed to prepare properly for class and the stress that caused for them. They also spoke about how the exhaustion was robbing them of their enthusiasm for teaching.

**Subcategory 2.1. Workload/overload.** Much of the impact of workload that teachers described on their health, personal time and relationships, and their instruction has already been presented. Teachers frequently indicated that the level of exhaustion they felt not only significantly impacted their performance in the classroom but also continued to impact their free time when the regular workday was done.

But at the end of the day, I’m always tired because I give it all I got you know. That's my job, it's like a performance every single class period. It's making sure that you're hitting all of the talking points you need to hit on, it's making sure that kids are doing what they need to do, it's constant vigilance for seven hours a day.

Most teachers described conditions of persistent exhaustion and inability to rest.

There are a few days where I definitely feel more drained. I mean because I didn't get enough sleep last night, or I've worked too much the day before. But, um, those days when I come home, I'm just exhausted. I don't want to talk to anyone, I don't want, I don't really want to do anything. I want to sit down and relax.
**Subcategory 2.2 Impacts on teaching.** Many of the impacts on classroom instruction have already been presented. Stress from dealing with an overwhelming workload impacts what teachers can bring to the classroom. One teacher described already being burned out when the school year began in August:

I was already burnt out in August, right when we started school. So no, especially this past quarter, I have woken up barely in time for like my classes. And it’s a struggle right now. I feel completely exhausted.

Another described days when they felt that they could not or did not want to do their job due to the intense work involved.

There are some days where I’m just like ‘I do not want to do this, I cannot get up today, I don't want to have to do three labs, I don't want to have to be exhausted all day long, I don't want to be running around,’ but those days are few thank goodness.

However, another described being able to step back and accept what they had done, even if it wasn’t perfect.

But there were some things where I was like, ‘You know what, that's good enough’ As opposed to like my complete polishing, like I normally would sometimes I was like, ‘we'll just kind of call that good instead,’ you know, I kind of cut back on my standards a little bit, which is some of what I need to fix. But then I would have, like, stints where I was extremely productive. And so I do like extra stuff knowing that eventually I’d burn out again. So, I tried to get ahead
**Professional Self-Efficacy**

Maslach et al. (1996) described personal accomplishment as the competence and success teachers feel in their job. In some applications of the MBI, this is also referred to as self-efficacy. The teachers interviewed expressed multiple instances of success in their job. They described how competence as professionals helped them to have a meaningful impact in students’ lives. They also described areas in which they were experiencing lower levels of self-efficacy and, consequently, were not performing as they thought they should. Madigan and Kim (2021) were among those who also described negative impact of teacher burnout on student academic achievement.

**Figure 12**

*Word Map of Most Common Words Used to Describe Professional Self-Efficacy*
The word cloud shown in Figure 12 represents the most common words used by participating teachers in describing self-efficacy. The top five were kids/kid/student, teacher/teachers, classroom, tutoring/working, and school. During the analysis of the interviews conducted, six categories of self-efficacy emerged. The largest area to emerge was that of teaching practice in which participants describes ways in which they experience competence and success in the classroom. Second, teachers described ways they experienced self-efficacy with students. The third category to emerge was that of how teachers were able to experience success in balancing their personal life and self-care with their job. In the last three categories to emerge, teachers described self-efficacy in relationships with colleagues, administration/governance structures, and with parents and the community.

**Category 1. Teaching practice.** When participants described areas of success and confidence in their practice, three subcategories emerged. Teachers described their confidence in their pedagogy as well as in planning and developing curriculum and lessons. They also discussed multiple methods they used in dealing with job related stressors.

**Subcategory 1.1. Pedagogy, planning and developing curriculum and lessons.** All teachers interviewed described ways in which efficacious teachers make a difference. They expressed the belief that an efficacious teacher knows that what they do is effective. One described how her presence in the classroom was a positive impact, stating that “I have a lot of energy and a lot of charisma. So I bring it into a classroom, when we do different things.” Another described their skills at planning lessons, “In terms of like lesson planning, I am very, very good at meeting multiple accommodations and
modifications.” Yet another described her skills in planning and organizing her classroom and instructional materials, stating that “I color code a whole heck of a lot. I'm very visually, visually aware of what I do on my page, and what patterns I do. I teach mathematics, so recognizing patterns within problems is extremely important.” Another described how she would “…work on trying to develop that with questioning techniques with, you know, discussions and discussion driving boards.” One described how she prepared instructional materials and was willing to share with colleagues:

But I'm, I'm very good at making slideshows that are visually appealing, and I'm good at finding resources, I love to collect them. And I develop a lot of graphic organizers, which I'm happy to share with you if you ever want them.

Others described the results when scores from their classes were compared to others. They expressed a knowledge that what they did mattered, stating “That being said, if you compare my scores to other special education classes teaching the same subject, I almost always have higher special scores,” and “But if you compare the raw test data, my students are usually five to 10% higher than the other classrooms.”

**Subcategory 1.2. Teacher knowledge of their classes.** During the interviews, teachers also expressed that they know what they do well and that they want to use those skills and abilities in their classes. They described their love of planning lessons, stating that “I'm very much about customizing your lessons. I love making activities. I love playing games with my kids.” They described how they made lessons relative to their students, saying that “I try and find ways in which I can connect the curriculum we're talking about into like long term planning and how it relates back to their life.”
They were very emphatic in describing how teachers, more than administrators, know their students, know their subject area, and know what is needed. They expressed the need for autonomy in lesson planning, stating that “I gotta have some freedom to be myself and focus on some things that I find interesting. Or some things that I think our students really need to know.”

One teacher described how he used students in the classroom as part of the instruction, to reduce his class load, and to also help with classroom management.

I would say that one of the most effective things is understanding that if you really look at the teaching domains, there's a huge impact on putting the students in charge. So if I'm trying to run everything myself, that is just so much going on all at once every period. So the more I can pass on to the students and say, ‘hey, you're in charge of this,’ ‘hey, come do this’ ‘hey lead this,’ I'm using this as an example. You know, just the more you can borrow from students, the so much better off you're going to be. It's built into the domains for a reason. It's good teaching practice, right, the more ownership a student has, especially in terms of behaviors, the student feels like their voice is being heard and has meaning.

Another described how she was taking things she had come to understand about how she learned while in her university classes and was considering using those practices in her classroom, feeling it might help her students to learn better.

As I was going through my college classes, every time I took a test or a quiz, I could use the book. And so I think it's important for kids to be able to find the information in the book and be able to write it down. So, I think that's another skill that I'm going to try and encourage when students come back in person.
**Subcategory 1.3. Stressors.** Teachers indicated that it was not only important to be able to identify stressors, but to have strategies for dealing with stress if they were to survive and to be successful. One pointed out that she would try to downplay how stressful some events could be to her, saying “I have really like de-escalated is not the right word. But I have downplayed, how important the last six weeks are in my own mind, maybe to manage those, that stress in those emotions.” Another pointed out that the stress they experienced was cyclical rather than chronic.

I have not had the experience that teaching is like, chronically stressful. I think it ebbs and flows. And usually, if it comes to a breaking point, I cry it out on my way home, and then I'm like upset for a few more days and then like, it resets.

The teachers interviewed described several ways that they would deal with the stress they felt. Among the activities used to destress, one described how she would use time with friends playing video games to destress and to grade.

Like even so I told you I play World of Warcraft to calm down. Even on like raid night. So a raid is when I get 20 of us and we go play in a dungeon together to kill bosses together. So there's me and 19 of my friends, one of which is my husband, playing together. And on my second monitor, I'll have my grading, and I'll grade between deaths on a World of Warcraft.

Another described how he was able to learn ways to cope with the stress of teaching, particularly the longer he taught.

As you overcome some of those things, you kind of learn coping strategies, and you become more resilient to some of those stressors. But I would say that, it
doesn't mean that the job is any less stressful, but you just find some ways of
coping with it [wind] and adapting to that.

The teachers interviewed indicated it was important to them to know and to use the
mechanisms they had for dealing with stress. One pointed out that sometimes, she just
needed a day off, saying “I'm not a crazy person about sometimes I'm like, you know
what, if I want the day off, and I want to go do what I want to do, I'll just go do it. And it
doesn't matter if I don't get paid.” Another pointed out that she was less stressed when she
acknowledged that maybe she didn’t have to fit everything in.

And I really just keep, even this year, throughout this whole year, and especially
as we approach the end here, that less is more, it's like, you don't have to fit
everything in. And I've just really held fast to that concept. And I think I'm
probably, I'm going to try to keep that in mind as we go into a normal year,
hopefully next year.

**Subcategory 1.4. Classroom presence and activities.** In describing their presence in
the classroom and methods of engaging students, responses ranged from being a large
advocate for tutoring and how they approached lesson planning to self-deprecating humor
and goofiness. Teacher approaches to lesson planning were varied. One described himself
as being one who preferred to wing it, saying about himself, “I'm very much a person that
doesn't have much of a plan when I go into my classroom. I don't know, I think it's just
like, the, like, I can communicate things with my students very clearly.” Another
acknowledged that while her classroom management was not the greatest, she was skilled
at planning lessons.
Lesson planning is my strength as a teacher, like, you know, we all have things that we're very good at, and we think that we suck at. I'll be honest, my classroom management is kind of garbo, but I'm just being honest about it, like, I've worked on it over the years, I've definitely improved.

Teachers also described their presence in the classroom. One described student comments they received from students highlighting how positive they had been during the year.

I think this year has been my, ironically, my most positive year with my students, I don't know if it's something about being in front of a camera that makes me just want to put on like, my best side, or, but like many of my students have been, like, ‘you have had such positive energy this year,’ I'm so happy to hear that, or to see ‘to come to your class every day.’

Another described how being herself in the classroom helped the students to open up and relate to her on a more positive level.

Once I kind of, I can't remember specifically when it happened, but when I had, I had some sort of experience where I let my true self show out, which is someone who's silly in the classroom, and, you know, who kind of uses self-deprecating humor to like level with the students and, and just in general, I had a lot more success there. And in turn, that helped that development helped them to be more engaged with the curriculum, so, or the content, the things that we were talking about, because they had a relatable source.

One described how, regardless of how hard they tried, no matter what they did in the classroom, there would always be some students they couldn’t reach.
Yes, we can try all these little things here and there. And yes, it will be successful for some students. So, it's worth it. But there are just some students that I feel like I can't reach, I can't get them motivated. I can't, you know, interest them as much as I can and they just aren't interested in being successful, like I said.

**Category 2. Students.** An efficacious teacher is able to engage students positively, is able to demonstrate caring, and is able to run an efficient classroom where students are engaged and participating. Three subcategories emerged under professional self-efficacy in the category of students: relations and engagements with students, mentorship and leadership in the classroom, and teacher self.

**Subcategory 2.1. Relations and engagements with students.** Students impact teachers lives, just as teachers impact student lives. Being a ‘team’ is important to both the teacher and the students being successful in the class. Teachers described many ways in which they ‘teamed’ with students. One described how knowing about their students and their interests could give them a point at which to connect to that student, particularly if the connection was sports; “I enjoy watching sports. And so, if I get an athletic male, we can bond over that. But in some of the other males, if they're nerdy males, we can bond over science and things like that” [Female teacher]. Another stated that “…I work so hard to build relationships with the kids.” One gave an example of a way she tried to make an impact, explaining “So, for example, I sent them birthday cards. So, every month I'd look at who had birthdays, and I literally did a little fundraiser and mailed them birthday cards.” Another pointed out that, even though she didn’t reach all students, by being real with them, she was able to connect to some more than she would otherwise.
You know, there's certain students that do gravitate towards me, because I do try to be someone positive. I don't I try not to, you know, let them know that, uhm... Basically, I try to show them that, you know, they have a positive impact in my life, as well as the impact that I might have in theirs.

Subcategory 2.2. Mentorship and Leadership in the Classroom. Teachers also described the importance of maintaining a disciplined, yet somewhat free atmosphere in the classroom. Within this, they also expressed the importance of providing mentoring and showing care to students who may not experience it at home. A big part of the mentoring described was providing feedback that would set a positive role model for student behavior as well.

But I always go out of my way to like, make sure that I leave like comments and stuff like, not always even about their their work, like ‘a good job, we got 100’ but like, ‘I see that you worked really hard on that. Thank you for taking the time to resubmit that.’ So not, not praising their intelligence but praising their efforts. Teachers also described activities that would help them to connect with students and build trust.

And what I would do is during lunch, I would just let them come in, they could either have a safe space to hang out with or if they needed help, I could help them with their work or whatever.

Several teachers cited the importance of establishing an open line of communication with students, pointing out that students would not learn from them if they didn’t trust them. And so having that open line of communication, that's the basis for teaching, you know, if a student can't trust me, or talk to me or hear me, then they're not going
to learn anything from me. So, establishing those relationships is like the most important thing. And so that's, that's kind of what I spend a lot of time on as well, just making sure we're positive.

They also pointed out several important practices in the classroom that not only were a part of the trust they hoped to establish, but that were crucial to classroom management. One of the first mentioned was respect.

And so right away, at the start of the year, I make sure my students know the expectations in the classroom, that respect is my number one rule, you don't have to like everybody, but you do have to respect everybody.

Teachers also expressed the importance of dealing with classroom management issues in the room and to involve the building administrators only if it was a true problem that could not be solved in house.

I manage my classroom to where if we have an issue, we deal with it in our room, if that makes sense. And so if it ever got bad enough for me to send someone to the office, there was, there was a real problem.

They also pointed out that while it was important to have the respect of students, that respect should not be a product of fear or intimidation, but rather the result of students feeling that they were in a safe space.

And I found a really, I think it was an article that just talks about how to deal with students who have an issue with authority. And one of the main points was get down on their level when you're talking to them. Because if they're below you, and you're towering over them, that makes them feel defensive, and things like that.
**Category 3. Teacher self.** Within the category of teacher self, no significant subcategories emerged. Rather, most participants described things they do to help them wind down and to recover from the stress of teaching. These ranged from cooking and cleaning to diving into video games to building with Legos. Some admitted that their method of dealing with stress was not the best, others acknowledged that even if it was strange, it was a method that worked for them.

You know, I really do struggle with being overly emotional about certain situations. And I always thought that that was, you know, a character flaw of mine until I got into teaching. And I realized just how valuable that was, you know. Some described new activities that had begun that helped to relieve the stress they were feeling.

I like Legos. And to avoid screentime, and to give myself some sort of creative outlet that doesn't require too much thought, I actually got really into Legos this year. That's kind of a weird hobby to have. But that's what I felt like I needed in order to cope.

Others described activities in which they once engaged, had quit, but then picked up again because they recognized the power of that activity in helping them cope with stress on the job.

I host game nights at my house all the time, stuff like that. So what I actually ended up doing with the COVID was I started playing World of Warcraft again, which sucks because I used to, I used to be pretty addicted to this game. It's terrible. So I kind of started that back up, which is probably an unhealthy behavior, but it's how I socialize, which is nice. So I de-stress on a video game.
Another described how cooking and sharing food with others was something that brought joy and helped him to relax.

When I don't have that I like to like cook and bake and stuff. And so my coworkers love that because I don't really have very many people to share my food with so I always cook and then bring them stuff. That's what I did today was I made cake pops and brought it all into them. And they're like, ‘oh my god’.

It is said that music soothes the savage beast. One teacher described playing music as a way that they de-stressed and, if that didn’t work, cleaning.

I have my guitar right here. I just play my guitar or try and learn new songs. I'll turn on my TV. I'll pick up my guitar and I'll try and learn a new song or something. And I could do that for hours. It really helps de-stress me out. If I'm really stressed, I will clean. I'm very much like my mother in that way. And like when I stress clean, I'll like deep clean everything.

Another described how she would vent to relieve stress, and how she needed to be selective in who she vented to, not wanting to cause stress in her relationship to her husband. She finished by describing another way that she could turn to if venting didn’t work.

I complain a lot. I do a lot of venting with my peers, with my husband. That can be difficult. He is not a teacher. So I usually don't vent to him because it frustrates me more. I'm trying to think, I don't, I don't have anything that I... specifically do to negate stress, or like any strategies that I use. On occasion, I will have a drink. I guess maybe I'll come home and be like, ‘Allright. Open a beer.’
**Category 4. Colleagues.** As with the category of Teacher Self, in this category, no subcategories emerged strongly. Rather, teachers expressed many ways that their relationships with colleagues help in dealing with stressors on the job. Teachers noted activities ranging from sharing ideas and activities to making themselves available to others, to showing appropriate affection to their spouse who is a teacher, to simply ranting together with colleagues about stressors. One pointed out how she and her husband, who is also a teacher in her school, not only create a positive space within their workplace, but create a positive environment where students would see a positive relationship, something that those students might not experience at home.

One of the most positive influences that we have on our kids is not necessarily what we teach, but how we treat each other. And, you know, with the, our kids growing up in these broken families and girls growing up thinking that their worth is only so far as them getting married, you know, it's, it's good for them to see what a healthy relationship is. And, you know, we're my husband and I are affectionate with each other not overly so. But you know, we'll hug or hold hands or something. And, you know, we always joke with each other, and we're goofy. And so, I think just having that relationship in the building really changes the dynamic and the outlook that our students might have on what a relationship is. So, I think that's a really positive outcome of working with your spouse.

One pointed out how important it was to her to be able to share the workload with a colleague. In this way, not only did it reduce the workload, but it also helped to create a greater sense of collegiality.
She and I will work together like, with this new schedule stuff’s like so overwhelming in terms of planning time, that we definitely split the load. So, like, I’ll start making presentations, we’ll cut and paste stuff, and then I’ll polish it. And then the next time she’ll make a review, and we share it. So, she and I, we meld pretty well with our resource development.

Another described how observing colleagues was an important part of developing her own set of teaching skills.

I try and pick what other teachers are doing, especially in cross discipline, right, I like to learn and see what other teachers are doing. And I think that we have a situation set up with our professional learning communities, where we can kind of build off of each other and share what are behavior intervention strategies that work really well?

One teacher pointed out the importance of collaborating with another teacher in dealing with a student.

So, I got advice from another teacher that helped me with a student, and then a situation where I gave advice to another teacher was, we had a student with an IEP, and part of it was behavioral issues and issues with authority.

One teacher admitted to the benefits of ranting with colleagues about the stress of the job, workloads, administrators, and students, saying “So yeah, we just we'd like to rant and just, we like to rant to each other. We like to just talk. So, it's just mutually exclusive. For us, I guess.” And finally, one teacher who described herself as a bit of an introvert, admitted that she had found colleagues to be very important in doing her job.
So, I have personally come out of my shell a little more and maybe like, refocused my relationships with my co-workers and tried to see the positive side of it, rather than the negative.... And that's really helped with my relationships with them is giving, instead of being secluded.

**Ideations of Leaving the Teaching Profession**

During the interviews, teachers were asked directly if they had a chance, would they change careers and what would they do instead. They were also asked how frequently they considered quitting or changing jobs. Interestingly, unlike other questions that lead to rich, meaningful discussions, the response to these questions was relatively sparse. However, it became obvious in the responses for most that leaving was something that they had considered seriously. While the discussions regarding leaving the teaching profession were sparse, but three categories did emerge; Teaching is a hard, exhausting job, happiness as a teacher, and leaving or staying in the profession.

**Figure 13**

*Word Map of Most Common Words Used to Describe Teacher Ideations of Quitting*
The word cloud shown in Figure 13 represents the most common words used by participating teachers in describing their considerations of leaving the teaching profession. The top five were administrator/administration/admin/district/principal, curriculum/develop/lessons, school, teacher, and classroom/room.

**Category 1. Teaching is a hard, exhausting job.** Almost every teacher talked, at least once, about how difficult the teaching profession is. From the workload, to dealing with changes due to COVID, to the daily grind of teaching, most of them talked about being tired and about how hard it was to be a teacher.

**Subcategory 1.1. Tired of the job.** Teachers indicated that while they enjoyed the students, they were tired of the job, and they were tired because of the job. They spoke to how difficult it was and how it was becoming harder to be enthusiastic about going back every year. Several comments spoke strongly to how tired the teachers interviewed were:

- And I think that sentiment that every single teacher who is doing their job properly is going to tell you, it's hard and I'm tired.
- Like, what else can I do? Because this is really hard.
- I don't have the energy for this anymore. This is really tough.
- It was really, really, really hard this year, I had never wanted to quit more than I want to quit now.
- Because this is really hard. I don't have the energy for this anymore. This is really tough.

**Subcategory 1.2. Overloaded.** Teachers spoke to the impact that the workload was having on them. They described low energy levels that were resulting from too much work and not enough time to recover. Several indicated that they had, or were,
considering other career options as a consequence of feeling overworked. Some commented on specific sources of overload that were causing them stress. These ranged from their subject area, “I would definitely miss science, but it's just so much work and I'm just so tired” to professional development work, “So I'm pretty, pretty stressed about the dossier because I don't want to mess up my licensure,” to describing why the previous year was one of the closest they had come to quitting their job in teaching.

The second closest, closest I had been was probably in my first or second year teaching when I was taking classes, developing curriculum, coaching, doing absolutely everything. I was at school until like eight or nine at night every day. It was just awful, but I made it through. I'm here.

**Subcategory 1.3. Don’t want to be a teacher any longer.** As the teachers began to open up during their interviews, some confessed that they no longer enjoyed teaching as much as they once had. One admitted that “…I'm done. I can't do this anymore. All of it sucks. This, there's, there's no hope it's pointless. I'm done. That was the closest closest I'd been.” Others described their enthusiasm for the job as being variable by the day.

So as far as like, other aspects ago, some days I don't. I, some days I wake up I'm like, I don't want to do this anymore. But those days are extremely far. That's usually when I have like a really bad day where like an administrator, like confronts me or if I. If it's just a really bad day at work, then obviously I will not want to go in.

**Category 2. Lack of enjoyment of the job.** Even though all the teachers had indicated that they felt successful as teachers, some indicated that they no longer enjoyed
the job. The requirements, the time preparing, or just the stress of the job had made a job that they once enjoyed now unappealing.

**Subcategory 2.1. Impact of others.** The importance of colleagues in job satisfaction was a common topic throughout the interviews. Comments regarding the positive impact of colleagues and collaboration with them were frequent. However, the possible negative impact of colleagues, due largely to differing work ethics or values, was a cause for concern in discussions regarding attrition. One described how they were concerned about being considered in the same category as colleagues who lacked a commitment to returning to work, saying “I'm disappointed in my colleagues and their kind of lack of commitment to returning to work. And so, I don't want to be lumped in with them.” Another described how the actions of others could cause her to momentarily consider quitting. “Some days when I'm super salty because somebody's being an asshole at district I'll be like, ‘Oh, why am I a teacher? I hate this.’ But I mean, I gripe but then would never leave probably.”

**Subcategory 2.2. Success as a teacher.** Feeling that you are successful and making a positive impact can be an important part of self-efficacy in any job, but particularly in teaching. However, even the best teachers can, at times, feel as if they are not making the difference that they want. Work overloads and a lack of supportive leadership can contribute to feelings of being unsuccessful and, sometimes, to thoughts of leaving the teaching profession. During her interview, one of the respondents who had earlier described successes she felt in the classroom said, “I realized that I don't think I can really make that much of an impact while I'm a classroom teacher.” Another pointed out
that she no longer felt that she got a great deal of fulfillment from teaching, due to the workload and stress.

But I also have to know too, that you know, I still need to do what makes me happy at the end of the day, and what allows me to wake up and, you know, be ready for, you know, whatever the day has. I just don't really feel that so much with the workload and the stress that I get as a teacher.

Subcategory 2.3. Dislikes of teaching. Teaching is a hard, demanding profession. Yet people continue to become teachers. Unfortunately, as some teachers indicated during interviews, the enthusiasm they once had about teaching and working with kids had been lost. They were no longer happy to go to work every day. Some, who early in the interview had described their love for working with kids, began to express that they no longer liked teaching and wanted to do something else. “Now I'm at this point where it's like, I know I don't want to be in teaching. I know that I don't want to be like a teacher for a really long time.” Another expressed feelings of guilt at the thought of leaving the profession. “The thoughts of me wanting to move on to a different career also causes me more of guilt, because I'm like, I don't want to leave the students behind.” Still another pointed out not only that she no longer enjoyed teaching but cited reasons for her dislike.

No, I don't like being a teacher because I don't like all of the planning. I don't like the documentation. I went through my first SAT process and it's just a lot of a lot of work. You know, and I understand the reasoning for it, and I do understand how it can be helpful and impactful for the student, but I just don't, I just feel like this is just so much more work that I have to do. You know, so it's just more so
like the all the documentation. I don't enjoy the grading aspect. I don't like, yeah. And I really don't like…

**Category 3. Leaving or remaining in teaching.** Ultimately, the outcome was that of a decision almost all teachers face. In spite of the difficulty, regardless of the rewards, even with the relationships with students, do they want to stay in the profession? Almost every teacher has, at some point, asked themselves if they really want to continue doing such a difficult job. Several subcategories emerged from the answers given regarding the potential of leaving the teaching field; many teachers were not happy in their job, teachers felt that they would be more effective in another position. Attrition rates were high, and teachers knew it. Some teachers were done and ready to quit.

**Subcategory 3.1. No longer happy in the job.** A common comment when teachers were asked if they had considered changing jobs was that many were no longer happy in their job, with one saying “Now I'm at this point where it's like, I know I don't want to be in teaching. I know that I don't want to be like a teacher for a really long time.” Other comments made regarding dissatisfaction with teaching have already been included in other subcategories. That being said, for several teachers, whatever joy they once felt had diminished or was gone. Teaching didn’t turn out to be what they had anticipated. It was also noted that the extra work beyond just teaching was causing at least a couple to think about moving to another profession.

**Subcategory 3.2. Might be happier in another position or job.** Teachers sometimes felt that they would be more effective, or happier, somewhere else. Some indicated, regardless of the successes they had described earlier, that they felt they were ineffective where they were and would be better able to impact student lives if they were in another
position, other than that of teacher. Others indicated that, even though they did enjoy teaching, they thought that they might be happier using their energy elsewhere, saying “Like if I could get hired on as, at a textbook company and just develop shit all day. I would be in the bee's knees.”

Others expressed that they might consider staying in teaching if they could move to a less stressful subject.

Um, and I thought about art teaching, being an art teacher. And I, that's something I would really love to do. I think I would have time to do my goals of become a human being, mindfulness, critical thinking, and I don't think there'd be science in there. But you know, you could teach art. And I think that would be a little bit more chill for me. I think it would be better suited to my personality.

Another possible position in education that one described was that of curriculum developer.

Ah, yes. I mean, only in that I look at the job postings for curriculum developers. Like, I know that one of them at district office is getting promoted. So, there's going to be a spot. I would be super happy. Um, but do I think about it for other fields, no

One pointed out that they would consider leaving the classroom to run their own school.

I often think of what it'd be like to own a school, what it would be like to be a principal. And so, I often think about some of those things. What does what does something beyond just being in the classroom look like?

For some, not teaching was not an option. However, they were tired of the public-school classroom and had thoughts of moving on to academia.
That’s a tough decision. Because I’ve thought about doing other things. But at the end of the day, it always goes back to teaching, right? Um, when I talked to you earlier about going for a master's and possibly PhD in pure mathematics at the end of my college career, still the ultimate goal there isn't to, isn't to be part of like some big research school. My ultimate goal is to teach. So, it's always been teaching for me at some level, whether it's high school or college.

Others described jobs completely out of education.

I think now more so what I'm interested in is just more of a community impact. And I'm where I'm actually leaning towards nutrition and kind of aligning you know, traditional foods with, with the, you know, the nutrition science, so, okay, I think that's more so what I would want to do, okay.

**Subcategory 3.3. Attrition rates are high in education.** Some teachers reported that they had seen a lot of attrition in their schools, with one teacher pointing out that “We have lots of teacher turnover, as well as admin turnover.”

It was pointed out that even those involved in teacher education programs were sometimes surprised by the level of attrition among teachers and school administrators.

But it's just I mean, the teaching role is just so it's such a fascinating thing, because you know, turnover in the teaching world is very high. And at our school, we have a very high turnover anyways, I mean, I've had a couple of my CNN professors come in, and they were actually a little bit surprised by how high over the turnover is I was like, "isn't all school like this?" So yeah, that definitely.

**Subcategory 3.4. Leaving teaching.** Some teachers admitted, occasionally with remorse, that they weren’t sure that they could continue. They were unsure if they could
commit to a full career of teaching and were unsure how much longer they would last. In the interviews conducted with teachers as a part of this study, over half indicated that they didn’t know if they could keep teaching under the conditions that they have experienced in their career thus far. Comments regarding teaching were varied, but in contrast to the positive comments about teaching that were made early in the interviews.

- So, if I compare last year to this year, last year, the days where I was like, I don't know if I want to do this for the rest of my life, for the next 30 years.
- I had never wanted to quit more than I want to quit now.
- Now I have been considering, like I said, this year, I've been considering more career choices than I ever have before…

**Summary of Qualitative Findings**

Word clouds were used to capture the words most frequently used in the discussions described above. The most common words that emerged at the top of four of the areas were work and teaching. Next, the top word or words in three areas centered on students. Administration and pay were each the most common word in one area. Taken cumulatively, the five most common words were kids/students, teacher(s), school/classes, classroom, and parents.

Several categories emerged across eight areas of interview discussions. Administration and governance, students, teaching practice, teacher self and private life, workload, and interactions with others were mentioned most frequently, in that order, in discussions of community, control, fairness, reward, values, workload, emotional
exhaustion and self-efficacy. Other primary categories emerged during discussions of leaving the teaching profession.

In discussions of administration and governance, teachers most frequently mentioned principals and administration with kids/students and teachers being second and third most mentioned respectively. Discussions of principals/administrators varied with the lack of administrator knowledge regarding what happened in the classroom being one of the most frequent observations. Several of the teachers also mentioned positive interactions and feedback with administrators.

In discussions of students, teachers mentioned students/kids three times more frequently than the next topic, classroom. Teachers spoke most often about issues dealing with relationships with students and the importance of building relationships in helping students to succeed. Teachers spoke of their concerns in helping their students to succeed, not only in school, but also in life. Concern over the homelife students came from was mentioned several times. Also important to teachers when discussing students were tutoring, understanding, positiveness, and teachers.

In discussions of teaching practice, teachers most frequently mentioned the subjects they teach or classes in general. After that, kids/students were most frequently mentioned at more than twice the rate of the third most common topic, books/textbooks. Teachers and school rounded out the top five topics teachers spoke of when discussing teaching practices.

In talking about teacher self and private life, teachers most frequently used the words stress, stressed, and stressful. In describing how this stress was a factor in their lives, they mentioned school, home, and family, including husband and us. They also mentioned
such topics as night, kids, and play in describing how their teaching job impacted their home life.

When describing their workload, teachers again emphasized the importance or role of students/kids. They also spoke frequently of curriculum development and lesson preparation as well as the role of the teacher and their multiple duties and roles.

Interactions with others was important in teacher interviews as well. The most frequently mentioned words were centered around school relationships such as teachers, colleagues, and teams. Teachers also frequently mentioned parents in discussions of important communities and relationships. Students were a very important part of the teachers’ communities and relationships.

**Integration of Datasets**

Integration of both datasets was accomplished using the themes, sub-categories, and finding from interviews and triangulating those results with the pertinent results from the six areas of worklife evaluated in the AWS. Table 8 provides this integration of data. The two themes that emerged from the interviews were workload and the role of teacher interactions and relations with administrators, as shown in the first column. The second column contains the key sub-categories and findings that led to the development of the two themes. The third column gives the descriptive statistics for the AWS areas the most strongly correlated to the sub-categories and findings.

By integrating from both the quantitative and qualitative camps of data gathering and analysis, it was possible to add teacher voice to the results of the survey. The primary goal of the integration was to look for areas of convergence and divergence in the data and to examine how they speak, not only the research question, but also to developing a
### Table 8

**Integrated Dataset from Survey Data and Interview Analysis**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THEME</th>
<th>QUALITATIVE SUB-CATEGORIES/ FINDINGS</th>
<th>DESCRIPTIVE STATS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The role of teacher interactions and relations with administrators</td>
<td>The relationship of administrators to staff in the context of a school community will set the tone for working in that community</td>
<td>COMMUNITY, N = 89, M = 3.863, SD = 0.664, Range = 2.40-5.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers are uncomfortable in dealing with administrators</td>
<td>CONTROL, N = 89, M = 3.638, SD = 0.717, Range = 2.00-5.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teachers feel that they have little control in their teaching assignments</td>
<td>FAIRNESS, N = 89, M = 3.179, SD = 0.740, Range = 1.00-4.80</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teachers feel that they are losing autonomy in their classroom in designing curriculum and lessons</td>
<td>VALUES, N = 89, M = 3.567, SD = 0.763, Range = 1.50-5.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teachers often report that they do not feel that they are supported by administrators</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teachers report that administrators often do not distribute workloads fairly or equitably</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teachers expressed dissatisfaction with administrators who are out of touch with the school community and what is happening in their school</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Administrators are sometimes perceived as caring more about procedures than they do about students</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teachers are concerned that the things they feel are important in the school and in their classroom is often not aligned with the values of administrators</td>
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<td>The heavy workload experienced by teachers is leading to high levels of stress, physical exhaustion, and emotional exhaustion leading some to consider other professions.</td>
<td>Collaboration with colleagues can ease some of the workload teachers experience</td>
<td>COMMUNITY, N = 89, M = 3.86, SD = 0.664, Range = 2.40-5.00</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Beyond “just” teaching, teachers often invest themselves in the lives of their students beyond the classroom</td>
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<td></td>
<td>According to teachers, sometimes the reward for being good at your job is receiving additional work or being assigned work that others do not do so well</td>
<td>FAIRNESS, N = 89, M = 3.179, SD = 0.740, Range = 1.00-4.80</td>
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<td></td>
<td>When teachers raise concerns that the workload they are assigned with duties beyond teaching, they feel that the concerns are largely ignored by administrators</td>
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<td></td>
<td>The teachers expressed a love for teaching and working with kids, but also expressed dislike for the extra duties they are assigned that they felt took their focus away from the important aspects of the job</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Some of the extra workload is generated by the teachers themselves as they voluntarily 'go the extra mile' in supporting students, set up extra tutoring times, use vacation time for workshops and training, and other such activities</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Virtual learning during COVID quarantines was seen by some as more difficult due to additional planning and by others as a relief in that they were freed from some of the duties they would normally encounter on campus</td>
<td>WORKLOAD, N = 89, M = 2.427, SD = 0.887, Range = 1.00-4.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Most teachers described how their workload was impacting their personal life, taking time away from families, keeping them from pursuing hobbies and interests, and encroaching on almost all their free time</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Teachers were working most of the time, keeping them from having time to recover from their workload and leading to exhaustion</td>
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*Note. AWS area describes the congruence a teacher feels with their job based on experiences in the expressed area. Descriptive stats used a Likert scale ranging from 1 (least congruent) to 5 (most congruent).*
better understanding of how all parts of the study can speak to the subject of teacher attrition.

When the role of teacher interactions and relations with administrators was evaluated, divergence in the data was seen in the areas of Community, Control, Fairness, and Values. In Community, Control, and Values, teachers surveyed indicated that they felt moderately positive about the role of the two in their workplace and career. In the area of Fairness, the mean of 3.18 was only moderately above the neutral value of 3.0, indicating that while they were slightly positive, there were concerns. The interviews in all four areas served to highlight areas of concern regarding the role of administrators in Community, Control, and Fairness.

The second potential factor that emerged when looking at teacher attrition was excessive teacher workload. There was a point of convergence in the area of Community, where teachers expressed appreciation for the role of colleagues and collaboration in building an effective educational program where they could meet the needs of students. They also gave positive examples of how they engaged students in positive ways beyond the classroom. Convergence was also seen in Workload, where low scores, including a mean value of 2.43, matched the negative opinions of workload expressed in teacher interviews. Divergence was seen in the areas of Fairness and Values. Teacher surveys indicated, as described previously, that Values and Fairness in their educational settings were mildly to moderately positive. However, in both areas, when describing Workload, teachers spoke negatively about the manners in which heavy Workloads were not congruent with their Values or ideas of workplace Fairness.
In both themes, areas of divergence between qualitative and quantitative findings were more common than areas of convergence, indicating that the data obtained from surveys and the data obtained from interviews would not necessarily match. Among the reasons to be discussed later is the possibility that, while surveys do collect data, even the most frequently used and highly validated surveys will probably not capture the full voice of the respondents. Further discussion will include thoughts on the necessity of using both methods to obtain the most comprehensive set of information regarding study subjects.
Chapter 5

Discussion

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between the burnout components of emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy and the outcome variable of intentions of leaving the teaching profession and to evaluate the six areas of worklife from the AWS to see if the relationship between the two burnout components served to mediate the relationship between the AWS and the outcome variable of intentions of leaving the teaching profession.

This study used mixed methods research in which quantitative methods were used to evaluate the potential presence of a predictive relationship between emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy. Then, quantitative analytical methods were used to evaluate the mediating effects of that relationship on the relationship between teachers' job stressors (AWS) and thoughts of leaving the profession.

Six current teachers from the state of New Mexico were recruited from among those taking the survey and interviewed. The interviews were transcribed, and thematic analysis was performed on the transcripts to look deeper into how teacher emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy informed their experiences with job related stressors and potential intent to leave the profession. In the final component of the mixed methods study, quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to search for additional meaning in the potential of teacher perceptions of their experiences with job related stressors and their knowledge of their own self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion in predicting those at risk of leaving the profession.
Summary of Findings

Demographics

Through the various portions of the study, emotional exhaustion, self-efficacy, and intent to leave the teaching profession were the outcome variables of interest. While thinking of leaving is not actually leaving, it is an indication of where a teacher’s thought process has gone as the balance between emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy has begun to tip (Betoret, 2006; Fives et al., 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010, 2017b; Zee & Koomen, 2016). In the current study, it was important to evaluate differences by participant and to ascertain if differences in the key outcome variables could be attributed, at least in part, to these differences.

ANOVA was conducted to see if the means of any of the measures of interest varied significantly on the basis of ethnicity, age, gender identification, income level, educational background, and tenure as a teacher. The results indicated that the null hypotheses of no difference could not be rejected in any of these analyses.

Research Question 1

It was important to explore the role that the relationship between emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy play in mediating teacher experiences in areas typically considered to be potential stressors and how that mediating effect, if it exists, influences their ideations of leaving the teaching profession. A teacher experiencing reduced levels of congruence with what they expect from their job will experience elevated levels of emotional exhaustion. However, a teacher experiencing elevated levels of congruence with what they expect in their job should experience elevated levels of self-efficacy (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2010). For that reason, it was crucial to first ascertain that, in this
sample group, such a relationship actually existed between emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy.

A Spearman correlation analysis was conducted between emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy. The analysis showed a strong correlation, indicating that there was a strong relationship. A regression was then run to determine whether self-efficacy actually predicted emotional exhaustion. The positive results indicated that the relationship seen in so many other studies was also present in the current study (Betoret, 2006; Fives et al., 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007, 2010, 2017b; Zee & Koomen, 2016).

**Research Question 2**

A primary goal of this study was to evaluate the mediating role of the relationship between emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy. A reciprocal relationship was demonstrated in the analysis for the first question. To study the mediating role of that relationship, it was necessary to develop a quantitative variable that described it. The variable, Burnout, was developed, as described previously, by subtracting the value of the Self-Efficacy variable from the value of the Emotional Exhaustion variable. This burnout variable was then used as a mediator variable to test the second research question.

It is an intuitive assumption that potential stressors and how teachers respond to them will carry over into how they feel about their job. Leiter and Maslach (1999, 2011) developed an assessment of six areas of worklife that are thought to be pervasive throughout most professional careers. These areas, community, control, fairness, reward, values, and workload were used in the current study to explore teacher worklife and potential stressors that teachers might experience on a regular basis.
Teachers in New Mexico are faced annually with the option to accept renewal of their teaching contract or to quit. Teachers have the opportunity to ask themselves if they wish to continue in the profession. The survey administered in the current study indicated that teachers consider leaving the profession more often than once per year. To explore these times when teachers reevaluate their career, it was necessary to develop a mediator variable to represent the role of both emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy in the decision-making process of teachers when considering their career future. The burnout variable, described previously, was as such a mediator.

Baron and Kenny (1986) described methods for statistically exploring the validity of potential mediators. As described previously, when assessed using all six areas of the AWS, a mediating effect was shown to exist. Numerous studies exist using either emotional exhaustion or self-efficacy as mediators or as moderators (Dexter & Wall, 2021; Fu et al., 2021; Ma et al., 2021; Madigan & Kim, 2021; Wang et al., 2015; Weißenfels et al., 2021). However, a similar combined application of emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy to represent the nature of their reciprocal relationship was not found in the existing literature.

The mediation model describes the relationship between two variables where another variable, a mediator, is hypothesized to be an intermediary and variances in that mediator can result in changes in the outcome (Fairchild & MacKinnon, 2009). As discussed previously, mediation was shown when the AWS job stressors demonstrated a significant effect on both the mediator variable (Burnout), and the outcome variable (LeaveJob). Additionally, it was demonstrated that the Burnout variable demonstrate a significant
effect on the LeaveJob variable. Mediation was finally verified when the effect shown in equation 6 was significant, but less than that determined in equation 5.

Demonstration of the existence of the mediating role resulting from the emotional exhaustion/self-efficacy relationship will potentially provide another bit of knowledge to be used in understanding how teachers process their daily job experiences, both good and stressful. In understanding how teachers process these experiences and how they take that knowledge and use it when considering a new career, teacher training programs, schools and school districts, and education departments at the local, state, and federal level have a new tool. This mediator was originally proposed as a lens through which teachers consider the stressors they face in their job when considering continuation of their career. This study would suggest that teacher retention programs may need to increase focus in the areas of emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy.

**Research Question 3**

Six interviews were analyzed to gather information that might be used to answer the question “How do teacher levels of self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion inform their experiences with job-related stressors and potential intentions of leaving the teaching profession?” To answer this question, the following approach was taken. Transcripts of the interviews were evaluated, and codes generated. From those codes, categories emerged that were evaluated to see what the respondents indicated would make for a healthy, productive, and efficacious workplace as well as what circumstances led to less healthy, less productive school workplaces. Category development also led to an analysis of why teachers said they are considering leaving teaching, or why they said that they would stay.
The AWS portion of the survey provided a broad analysis of how teachers perceived their job and work areas experienced in most jobs. Using semi-structured interviews, teachers were given the opportunity to elaborate on each of the six areas of worklife studied with the AWS as well as discussing feelings of exhaustion and thoughts of changing jobs. From this, two themes emerged that described potential areas of exhaustion, or of growth in efficacy. Relations with administrators and job workload both were seen as areas of potential stress or growth. These two areas strongly impacted all other areas of the teacher’s career. While the school community, including students, colleagues, and parents, also exerted a strong influence over teacher satisfaction with their job, it was not to the degree of administration and workload. These two themes aligned with the findings of Clandinin et al. (2015) in which they developed seven themes regarding areas that strongly influence teacher decisions when thinking about their careers. The theme of relations with administrators that was demonstrated in this study aligns with their themes of support and of tension around contracts. The theme of job workload aligns with their themes of the idea that new teachers will do anything, balancing and composing a life, and the struggle to not allow teaching to consume them.

Administrators in educational systems are largely responsible for setting the mood in a workplace (Tsang et al., 2022; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011). Supportive administrators who provide guidance, support, and encouragement to their staff create an environment which emotional exhaustion is reduced and teachers are more likely to feel more efficacious in their job performance (Tsang et al., 2022; Ware & Kitsantas, 2011). The teachers in the current study cited specific instances of administrators who encouraged them, who told them that they liked what they saw happening in classrooms, and who they felt to be
approachable. Teachers spoke positively about job experiences with administrators who they felt supported them.

Conversely, administrators who were not supportive, who were discouraging in their comments to teachers, and who facilitated an adversarial climate will find themselves working with an exhausted, less efficacious staff (Ware & Kitsantas, 2011). Teachers indicated the frustration they felt when dealing with administrators who did not listen to them. They pointed out that they felt less valued when their professional opinions and solutions to issues were ignored. They felt that they were taken advantage of when they demonstrated exceptional skill in teaching, only to be rewarded by a larger workload with little, or more frequently, no compensation.

In education, as in any profession, the role of those in authoritative positions is an important one. This study indicated that educational leaders who valued their teaching staff and their skills, who let their staff know that they were valued, who attempted to remain cognizant of ongoing teaching practices, classroom issues, and difficulties their staff might be experiencing without being intrusive, and who demonstrated humility and compassion as a part of their leadership were most appreciated and valued by their staff. These administrators created environments in which teachers felt safe, in which teachers’ self-efficacy could flourish. Conversely, teachers in an environment with an educational boss who lacked compassion, who only spoke negatively or critically to staff rather than encouraging them, or who did not provide opportunities to grow as an educator generated an adversarial climate in which teachers became exhausted and began to question their choice of careers.
In the interviews, as in the survey, it became obvious that the relationship between administrators and teachers is complicated. As professionals, teachers spoke to the need to be valued. They expressed their wish to have their opinions, their professional skills, and knowledge respected and to have their viewpoints heard. They acknowledged that administrators have a difficult job in which they are not as respected as they possibly should be. However, they also stated that they, as teachers, need that same degree of respect. The need for administrators to be leaders with positive, effective people skills emerged strongly as key components in what teachers felt would build an efficacious educator team.

In describing their practice as professionals, teachers spoke strongly about the impact of a heavy workload on their ability to be efficacious educators. When describing heavy workloads, they did not speak as much about the basic teaching portion of the job as they spoke about extra duties, IEP’s, reporting duties, multiple courses to prepare for, and extra tasks they had as teacher leaders. Teachers indicated that they took their duties personally, that they wanted to do the best that they could for their students. When the requirements imposed on them not only cut into the time that they had to prepare for lessons they were to teach, but also cut into their personal time and the time they need to “wind down” from the stressors encountered in their job, they described feelings of stress, exhaustion, and frustration.

Every teacher said early in the interview that they loved their job. They said that they love kids and love teaching. However, near the end of their interview, when they felt more comfortable with the interviewer and were more honest and open, at least half stated that they were exhausted, they were always tired, and that they didn’t feel they
could continue in the profession. They described most of this exhaustion as a consequence of the workload that not only kept them from doing their best, but also from feeling efficacious. They also explained how an extensive workload cut into private time with their families and into time to engage in leisure activities that would help them to relax and wind down from a stressful job.

Heavy workloads in teaching are nothing new (Heffernan et al., 2022; Leiter & Maslach, 2016). However, the increased demand for accountability that reaches back at least as far as A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983) has resulted in demands for testing that cut into instructional time, reporting that cut into preparation time, and have created an environment in which teachers are questioning their own teaching skills and career choice (Darling-Hammond, 2004). The result is an attrition rate that is not only leaving minimally qualified or unqualified persons in teaching positions, but that is also increasing the workload of already overburdened teachers as they are required to take up the slack in a diminished system (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Maciejewski, 2007; Madigan & Kim, 2021; National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future [NCTAF], 2003).

Additional areas of teacher life also proved to play a role in the efficacy/exhaustion interaction. Among these are those the teacher encounters professionally, including students, colleagues, parents, and other community members. The primary community interaction a teacher has is with students. Teachers in the current study cited two primary modes of interaction with students, instructional and personal. They spoke of the importance of delivering the instruction that was mandated by standards and also what they, as subject area specialists, felt students needed to learn. However, they also spoke
passionately about the need to engage with students, to “…know their story…” as an important part of what they did as educators. Several instances were given in which the respondents engaged with students and families in trying to help the student. These ranged from helping a family in which the father had lost his job and could not afford the wi-fi needed for online instruction to working with a student and family to develop success strategies to help the student graduate to grieving with a family after a student suicide. Students can contribute to emotional exhaustion, but those instances were rare, with most stories of student interaction boosting teacher efficacy rather than exhaustion. Student interactions were minimal sources of emotional exhaustion. The greatest source of frustration occurred when teachers felt that they needed administrator assistance in dealing with students, but that assistance was not given or that they experienced negative responses or even retaliation from administrators for making the request. Effective administrative leaders who value their professional educator staff can do much to reduce emotional exhaustion and, consequently, promote efficacy and retention in their staff.

The importance of relations with colleagues and parents also emerged, but not as strongly as that with students and with administrators. And as with students and administrators, colleagues and parents play a role in boosting efficacy or increasing exhaustion. Parents were mentioned infrequently, but positive interactions with parents were described in which working as a team to help the student promoted self-efficacy. Dealing with a problematic, accusatory parent were described as increasing exhaustion.

Collaboration with colleagues, planning together how to divide the increasing volume of duties, sharing how to deal with challenging students, and other such educator team activities were cited in a positive light during the interviews. Teachers valued the
colleagues with whom they teamed and described opportunities that came from mentoring and being mentored. They also pointed out specific instances when their workload was increased due to inability or unwillingness on the part of colleagues to do their job.

Teaching is a hard, exhausting job. Themes emerged that highlighted areas in which the efficacy/exhaustion balance was seen to tip toward exhaustion, making the job even more difficult. Half of those interviewed began by describing their love of teaching. But as they opened up, they described how stress and exhaustion had brought them to the point of leaving what they love, working with kids. The type of increased stress levels encountered described by these teachers have been shown to have a demonstrable impact on the mental health of teachers (Ji et al., 2021).

While this study was conducted during a time of a global pandemic, it is not a study of the effects of that pandemic. Nevertheless, the influence of the pandemic must be discussed. Teacher reactions in describing the impact of suddenly teaching remotely were varied. Most of the teachers expressed that they missed seeing their students in person. They talked about how engaging students in discussions online was not the same as face-to-face discussions. More than one expressed concern over actual attendance in online sessions by students when they were not allowed to require students to have cameras on. They expressed a sense of loss. Some felt that the already heavy workload increased as a result of moving instruction online. They explained that they had to develop methods to deliver scripted instruction in a manner for which the scripted instruction was not designed. Others pointed out that with online instruction, they had more time to prepare
lessons and more time for themselves and their families. The results varied by teacher and school.

Research Question 4: Integration of quantitative and qualitative methods

At the heart of mixed methods research is the mixing that brings together two seemingly parallel strands of data gathering and analysis and blends them in a search for further insights. Creamer (2018) described mixing as “…the linking, merging, or embedding of qualitative and quantitative strands of a mixed methods study” (p. 5). Creswell and Tashakkori (2007) pointed out that mixed methods is more than two strands of research reported in the same paper. Instead, they pointed out, the strands must be blended, or integrated.

The final research question involved integration of both the quantitative and qualitative data generated. For this analysis, descriptive statistics from the AWS areas were merged with categories and sub-categories from the thematic analysis of interview transcripts (see Table 8). Analysis of the resulting table disclosed some points of convergence, but more points of divergence, where the teacher voices from interviews did not fully match the results of the survey. Using the mean, standard deviation, and range of values reported initially in results was informative but did not adequately explore the data they represented. Box plots were generated to demonstrate not only the measures of central tendency, but also to provide information regarding the spread of the individual data points (See Figure 14). Using the quartiles of a box plot, along with the mean value and outliers plotted and how they deviated from the neutral value of 3.0 provided a clearer look at survey data and enabled the generation of better comparisons.
**Figure 14**

*Box Plots of Community, Control, Fairness, Values, and Workload Survey Data*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistic</th>
<th>1st Quartile</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>3rd Quartile</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>3.600</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td>4.400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>3.800</td>
<td>4.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fairness</td>
<td>2.700</td>
<td>3.200</td>
<td>3.700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Values</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td>3.800</td>
<td>4.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workload</td>
<td>1.600</td>
<td>2.400</td>
<td>3.200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Vertical column represents the score values from the AWS, red cross represents mean value.

**Teacher Interactions and Relations with Administration.** The teachers who were interviewed spoke positively most often regarding the community within and around the school. This is reflected in the mean value of 3.86, meaning that, for the most part, teachers did agree that their educational community was a positive part of their teaching experience. This is also demonstrated in the box plot shown below in which 75% of those surveyed gave a value greater than 3.6 and a median value of 4.0 for responses measuring Community. However, the survey questions regarding community did not specifically
address the role of administrators in that community. The feeling of teachers towards administrators seems to diverge negatively from that expressed in the survey. Teachers cited numerous examples of how administrator actions set the tone for the school. They cited difficulties they had in dealing with administrators, including distrust and a lack of comfort with the relationship.

Data regarding teachers’ feelings of Control that they experience in their workspace, particularly when dealing with administrators, was again negatively divergent. Surveyed teachers were moderately in agreement that they do have some control in their classrooms and job, with mean scores for Control of 3.6. Half of the respondents selected values greater than 3.8 and 75% were above 3.0, indicating that most felt at least mildly positive regarding the Control they felt in their job. The lower quartile had values ranging from 2.0 to 3.0, indicating a wider variety of opinion among those who did not feel positive about Control in their workplace.

However, the teachers interviewed had many concerns regarding a loss of the control that they felt they needed to be successful teachers. The most noteworthy loss of control expressed during interviews was that of autonomy in planning and delivering lessons. The implementation of scripted instruction in many districts has been met with apprehension. Fitz and Nikolaidis (2020) cite the need for greater teacher autonomy in the classroom as flexibility to meet student needs is an important component of a democratic society. Eisenback (2012) encouraged teachers to place their own ethical and value-based teaching ideologies above mandates to use scripted curriculum if there was a conflict. In the current study, teachers expressed that this was exactly what they did, trying to negotiate the requirements to teach from a script but making necessary
modifications to meet the needs of their students, even if it placed them at odds with their school and district administration.

The data for Fairness were again negatively divergent, but only slightly so. The survey data had a mean of 3.18 and a median value of 3.2, just above the neutral point of 3.0, with a range of 1.0 to 4.8. With most of the survey data centered near 3.0, the divergence was not as great as in Community and in Control. When using their own words, teachers expressed concerns about fairness, particularly in the area of administration. In addition to feeling that they were not supported or treated fairly by administrators, teachers also indicated that they saw favoritism and inequitable distribution of tasks in their schools. Teachers who are capable, experienced, and have a good record with students are often given more challenging students in an attempt to counter educational inequalities that exist in many educational institutions (Darling-Hammond, 1998; Peske & Haycock, 2006). None of the teachers surveyed indicated a desire that they not be assigned to more challenging or time-consuming groups of students. Rather, the point that they raised was that of planning time and compensation for the extra work required with more challenging groups.

Values provided interesting interview data in that while teachers expressed that they were able to teach in a way congruent with their own values, they often didn’t feel that administrators shared those values. Teachers pointed out that they sometimes felt that administrators put policy before students. In the survey, teachers indicated that they feel that their teaching position is moderately congruent with their own values. A mean of 3.6 and a median of 3.8 are second in congruency only to control. The box plot in Figure 14 shows that 75% of the respondents gave a value of 3.0 or greater, demonstrating that 75%
of teachers surveyed feel that their job is congruent with their values in teaching. The central 50% are clustered between 3.0 and 4.0, indicating that most teachers feel mildly to moderately congruent with being able to follow their set of values in their job, while the top 25% felt moderately to very positive about following their values in their teaching.

**Teacher Workload.** Teachers in the current study indicated that, for the most part, they felt that their educational community was congruent with their job. They felt that relations with others in their workplace were mostly positive. The scores for Community were the most positive of all six areas in the AWS with a mean of 3.9 and a median score of 4.0. The standard deviation of .664 was the lowest of all areas, indicating less spread in the responses from teachers. This data converged positively with the interview data in which teachers spoke about the positive nature of collaboration with colleagues and work with students and provided only a few negative examples of colleagues who did not help make the workload more tolerable. The most frequent comments made regarding the role of colleagues and workload was in the area of collaboration. Several of the teachers interviewed discussed ways that they had collaborated with colleagues in a way that reduced the workload for both.

For the area of Fairness, with a mean of 3.2 and a median of 3.2 as well, the results were normally distributed, indicating that most found fairness in the workplace to be a bit more positive than the neutral value of 3.0. 50% of responses were between 2.7 and 3.7. However, a slight divergence was seen when those interviewed expressed negative responses regarding fairness in the assignment of extra duties and regarding their workload in general. They felt that favoritism was not uncommon and that administrators
would often increase the workload of those who proved to be proficient in teaching and other tasks that they were assigned. In other words, the better teachers were at their job, the more work they were assigned, often without compensation.

Survey results indicated that teachers felt moderately positive that the Values they brought to their job were matched by workplace policies and ethics. The mean of 3.6 and median of 3.8 were indicators of this. This finding was divergent when compared to the results of teacher interviews. When the role of values in workload was discussed in interviews, teachers indicated that while they loved teaching, the extra duties they were assigned took them away from having adequate time to prepare for their students and to develop plans to meet student needs. They felt that they were not providing the best instruction that they were capable of.

However, teachers also seemed glad to discuss many things that they did that might be considered “above and beyond” the job duties, including spending personal time doing such things as attending extra-curricular events, sending birthday cards, contacting parents just to let them know that their child was doing good, and opening their classroom during their break or off duty times for students to meet or receive tutoring. Their personal and professional values, as teachers, would lead them to perform these extra self-imposed duties, further increasing their workload.

In the survey, the area in which teachers indicated the least congruence with their job was that of Workload. The moderately negative mean and median of 2.4 each indicated that most teachers did not feel that their workload was congruent with a positive work experience. 75% expressed a value for Workload below 3.2 and 50% were below 2.4, indicating that most teachers thought negatively regarding the Workload in their
workplace. This was an area of convergence with the interview results in which teachers expressed negative feelings toward their workloads. Most gave examples of the impact that their workload was having on them professionally and personally, including on their relationships and health. Most of the teachers surveyed described being tired or exhausted by the job. In some cases, they indicated that they were considering quitting teaching, largely due to the workload.

**Integration Summary.** The final research question explored the possibility that teacher perceptions of their experiences with job related stressors and knowledge of their levels of self-efficacy and emotional exhaustion could be used as predictors of those who may leave the profession. Maybe it could. But the truth is that teacher attrition is a far more complex matter and is not so easily answered. As demonstrated by the current study, there are tools that might be used to analyze the climate of a school and, consequently, evaluate the need for interventions before teacher attrition does become a problem. The tools from the current study could also be helpful in highlighting causes of attrition within individual districts and schools. Using the lens of Emotional Exhaustion/Self-Efficacy along with personal interviews was shown to be a way to shine a light on areas of teacher worklife where things are going well and on problem areas. Using both research methodologies can be used to move areas of concern forward that might be hidden or not so obvious when using just quantitative or qualitative analysis. Utilizing the tools of quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews and fully integrating the results creates insights that can better help us to understand and mitigate the problem of teacher attrition.
This study demonstrated the importance of giving teacher voice to surveys. Survey responses in the current study provided results that were, for the most part, greater than 3.0, or positive. But those results were based on a Likert Scale survey, which did not provide the opportunity for teacher voices to be heard, as they would when using open ended questions, or in interviews. By adding the opportunity for teachers to not only respond in an ordered survey, but to also express themselves and their thoughts with their own words, the findings of the survey and the interviews enhance one another.

**Limitations**

Limitations exist in all study designs and this study is no exception. Limitations were observed in terms of the timing of data gathering, sample size, impacts from COVID related changes to educational programs, and in the area of a single researcher performing analysis of interview transcripts.

Data collection for this study occurred late in the Spring 2021 semester, which was near the end of the school year for most school districts. This is a very stressful time for teachers. Added to the normal stresses seen at the end of the year, additional stresses were brought on by changes in educational programs due to COVID. Some schools were still using remote instruction, others had returned to face-to-face learning at some point during the 2020-21 school year. Some schools had switched between remote and in-person learning and back to virtual teaching several times during the school year, which complicated the process of instructional delivery. The enhanced level of stress teachers incurred at the time of the study could have influenced their responses to questions in all areas of the survey. It could have also influenced the responses given during interviews.
Another limitation of the study was the relatively small sample size. With the onset of COVID related changes in instruction, such as online teaching, some larger school districts in the state declined to allow their teachers to participate in the study. Attempts to have districts, schools, and principals provide support were also unsuccessful, as most did not wish to further burden their staff. Participants were finally recruited via direct emails made using addresses published on school and district websites. 178 teachers opened and began to complete the survey. However, only 90 finished the survey and one of those was invalidated due to incomplete answers.

Due to the limited sample size and restricted recruitment in larger districts, generalizability of this study to the larger population of New Mexico secondary school teachers is limited. Future studies, undertaken when districts are not as hesitant to allow participation of teachers in research, should yield more generalizable results. An additional limitation due to the relatively small sample size was the inability to conduct reliable analysis on the basis of gender, ethnicity, income, tenure, or education level. While this study yielded no significant results on the basis of any of these variables, it is the opinion of the researcher that such effects likely exist and would become apparent in a larger sampling.

It is a norm in qualitative analysis of interviews to have multiple analysts review each transcript. Saldaña (2016) discussed the importance and benefits to be derived from collaborative coding of qualitative data. As a consequence of the thesis nature of this study, solo coding of the data was necessary. This limited the potential richness of analytical findings. Future studies should include collaborative analysis of qualitative data.
Future Directions

The research objective of this study was to explore answers to four research questions using mixed methods analysis. Though all data obtained was reviewed, it was not possible to present it in its entirety here. The potential for multiple future studies and papers exists using the data gathered. The qualitative analysis performed used a very specific thematic analysis designed to address the research questions posed. Future studies might include a different method of qualitative analysis, possibly including narrative inquiry, grounded theory, or case study.

This study drew upon Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory as a theoretical foundation for the analysis of data. However, the study also demonstrated that emotional exhaustion is equally important in studies such as this that explore the teacher experience and what factors may lead to attrition. Figure 1 demonstrated the relationship of the four experience areas that inform self-efficacy in a teacher. The author would propose that when any of these four are experienced in a negative manner, that the negative information received by the teacher is experienced as emotional exhaustion, as shown in Figure 15. It is recommended that this potential model be evaluated in future studies.

This study underscores the importance of administrators in setting the mood for the educational workplace. However, it would be valuable to have a more fine-grained analysis of the role of administrators in teacher success and how their interactions and management styles impact teacher job satisfaction and attrition. Future studies focused specifically on these sorts of interactions should be conducted.
Figure 15

Proposed model from the merger of the current study model for emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy with the model for Bandura’s Self-Efficacy Theory

Teacher workload has been shown to be a factor in emotional exhaustion and in teacher burnout, leading to reduced job satisfaction and possibly increasing attrition (Brill & McCartney, 2008; Kersaint et al., 2007; Olsen & Anderson, 2007; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2017b, 2017c). Any attempt to understand the causes of elevated rates of teacher attrition should include a deeper look into the role of workload. Specifically, more insight is needed into the nature of the duties that teachers are called upon to
perform beyond the normally accepted duties of preparing and delivering instruction and evaluating learning.

The sample size limited analysis of effects due to gender, ethnicity, income, education, and tenure. Other studies have indicated that variables such as gender and ethnicity can be significant in teacher dealings with administration, burnout, and attrition (Fairchild et al., 2012; Pivovarova & Powers, 2022). It is possible that such effects exist in the study population but were not evident in the study sample. Future studies should seek to use larger sample groups so that such effects, if they do exist, are more likely to be observed.

Lastly, in the Maslach Burnout Inventory Manual (2018), Maslach proposed that teacher scores on the MBI might change throughout the year in response to the “ebb and flow of change” seen in schools. A longitudinal study of this effect using the MBI and AWS should be considered in the future, particularly using a larger sample more representative of the New Mexico teacher population. A study such as the current one provides information from a point in time, while teacher experiences are part of a continuum of interactions.

Conclusions

After some 30 years of [analyzing teaching], I have concluded that classroom teaching is perhaps the most complex, most challenging, and most demanding, subtle, nuanced, and frightening activity that our species has ever invented… The only time a physician could possibly encounter a situation of comparable complexity would be in the emergency room of a hospital during a natural disaster. (Shulman, 2004)
This study sought to explore the mediating role that changing levels of emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy played in the interaction of job stressors and teacher ideations of leaving the teaching profession. Findings indicate that emotional exhaustion and self-efficacy are related and that, together, they mediate between job stressors and attrition. Using the mixed methods analytic process, it was shown that issues related to administration and workload are the primary stressors in teacher thoughts about leaving teaching. This study also demonstrated that in relatively simple, easy to answer surveys, teachers will tend to be more positive. However, when allowed to take time to discuss their job, they will begin to express their concerns and thoughts at a deeper level than is possible in a succinct, Likert scale survey. This would indicate that those wishing to delve deeper into problems related to teacher stress factors and attrition rates should consider using a mixed methods approach.

Predicting the possibility of a teacher strongly considering leaving the profession, especially during a global pandemic is quite difficult. As Shulman (2004) pointed out, teaching is a difficult, often unforgiving career. When this study was originally designed, 50% of teachers in the United States left the job in the first five years (DeAngelis & Presley, 2011; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003; Maciejewski, 2007; National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future [NCTAF], 2003). Teaching is not an easy job. Even a teacher with the strongest level of efficacy, who truly believes in herself and knows that what she does is right and good for her students can be whittled down by continuous negative hits, particularly when very little, if anything, occurs in between to bolster her enthusiasm and boost her efficacy again. Yet many teachers continue in the profession despite a lack of support, limited control over what and how they teach and interact with
students, and paltry salaries compared to others in professions requiring a college degree and state certifications. In writing this conclusion, the researcher was still struggling to compile evidence in the data for a final statement on why, regardless of the high attrition rates, we still have teachers dedicated to the profession who are highly qualified to work in other fields and earn higher salaries and encounter lower levels of stress. It was decided to take all codes from the study, together, and to analyze them with a single word cloud. The graphic in Figure 16 is what emerged.

Figure 16

Word Cloud of All Codes Developed

Kids, parents, play, relationships, colleagues, curriculum, issues, understanding, teachers, respect, us, life, husband, wife, and love. It all matters. This study presents a model that can be used to look at what teachers experience. But while these models and procedures may yield insights into what is occurring in schools, at the end of the day, they can’t measure or explain the human spirit exhibited by dedicated teachers.
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APPENDIX A

Survey Items Generated by Author

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<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I enjoy working as a teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>I look forward to going to school every day</td>
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<td>Working as a teacher is extremely rewarding</td>
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<td>When I get up in the morning, I look forward to going to work.</td>
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<td>I wish I had a different job rather than being a teacher</td>
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<td>If I could choose over again, I would not be a teacher.</td>
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<td>I often think of leaving the teaching profession.</td>
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</table>

Questions to address the impact of COVID-19 on input

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<tr>
<th>Questions to address the impact of COVID-19 on input</th>
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<th>4</th>
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<th>6</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Given the current circumstances surrounding changes due to COVID-19, the administration in my school provided adequate support and guidance in the transition from classroom to remote teaching.</td>
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<td>My experiences, education, and training as a classroom teacher helped prepare me to transition to online teaching with minimal difficulty.</td>
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<td>As a result of changes in education due to COVID-19, I would like to find a different profession.</td>
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</table>

Open ended questions to be added to the survey:

1. Describe how the changes in education, due to COVID-19, have affected you personally, as well as your ability to successfully accomplish your teaching responsibilities and goals.
2. Describe your thoughts, feelings, approach regarding returning to teaching either remotely, in the classroom, or in a hybrid format after having taught at least half of the spring 2020 semester from a remote location.
APPENDIX B

Guiding Questions for Semi-Structured Interview

NOTE: Final order of questions will be different to better accommodate grouping by discussion topic.

**Stressors**

**Time/Worklife**

1. Do you have enough time to do what your job requires of you?

2. Do you have enough time to do what you think is important in your job?

3. Does teaching impact your time to pursue personal interests outside of the classroom?
   Describe how, or why you think not.

4. Can you leave your work behind when you go home at the end of a workday? Why or why not?

5. How do you convince administrators of the importance of your topic area? Do they support you then?

**Control**

1. How independent are you in what you do in your classes? Explain.

2. How do you control your class assignments, room assignments, student selection, etc. each year?

**Reward**

1. Are you adequately recognized by school/district leadership and/or the community for your contributions in the classroom and to your school and/or district? How, or how not? Please explain.
2. Do your colleagues recognize/acknowledge your contributions and value to your department/school? How, or how not?

3. Are you appropriately compensated for your work and time? Explain.

**Fairness**

1. Does the administration in your school/district treat teachers fairly and equally? Explain


3. Are resources distributed equally among teachers in your school? Explain.

4. Evaluate the following statement in light of your current or last teaching assignment.
   “In teaching, it isn’t what you know, it’s who you know”

5. Describe the appeal process in your school/district if you disagree with a decision that was made.

**Values**

1. Describe your professional values and goals as a teacher. Does your current, or did your last, teaching assignment enable you to follow those values and work toward those goals? Explain.

2. Explain how your school/district is or isn’t committed to excellence in student education.

**Job Satisfaction**

1. Do you enjoy being a teacher? Why, or why not?

2. Describe how satisfied you are, or aren’t, with your teaching career.

**Leaving the profession**
1. If you could change careers today, right now, would you? Why, or why not? What would you choose to do instead?

2. How often do you think of leaving teaching? Why, or why not.

Self-Efficacy

1. Instruction: Describe your approach to developing or designing lessons that meet the needs of all students in your classes, or if you don’t, why not? Do you feel that you are successful in doing this?

2. Student Motivation: How do you go about getting students to put forth their best effort? Taking an introspective approach, describe to me how you feel about your own efforts to help students put forth their best effort and to succeed in the classroom, even if they lack motivation or innate ability.

3. Relations with students: Are you a positive force in the lives of your students? Are you able to empathize with your students?

4. Cooperation: How do other teachers figure into your daily work life, both in the classroom and out, as you engage others in your school? How well do you get along with other teachers/administrators, parents? What is it like to work with your colleagues? Can you tell me about times you have worked collaboratively with other teachers, administrators, and parents to develop plans to help a struggling student?

5. Change: How do you deal, or would you deal, with mandated changes in curriculum and how you are able to teach in your classroom? Can you describe a time when you had to deal with a change that was mandated, beyond your control, and impacted your classes?

6. Has your presence in the classroom made a difference? How?
Emotional Exhaustion

1. How do you feel at the end of a day teaching? Do you wake up motivated to go back to the classroom the next day? Do you look forward to the start of school each new year? Why/why not?

2. How do you feel when you are asked to work with your colleagues?

3. How stressful is your job? How do you cope with stress in your job, if there is any?

4. Does your job force you to work too hard? Talk to me about your emotional investment in teaching.

COVID

1. How have the changes in your circumstances due to COVID-19 affected your ability to be an effective teacher? Describe how you are experiencing teaching remotely.

2. Describe the support that you have, or haven’t, received since you were told that schools would be closed, and that teaching would continue remotely?

3. What are your school and/or district plans to re-open for the fall semester? Do you feel that you are prepared to teach under these conditions? Why, or why not?

4. Describe how you feel about being a teacher at this moment in time.